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ABSTRACT

Intended to influence parents to play an important role in their child's education, this guide is an educational how-to book written in simple, easy-to-understand language, showing parents how to engage in activities with their children at home that will upgrade academic performance at school. The book covers 77 concepts, each presented as a separate article. Each article is organized to present a specific problem confronting some learners; discuss a potential solution; and, outline the solution. The articles include the following: (1) parental attitudes and the child's learning environment; (2) reasoning situations; (3) training memory; (4) vocabulary enrichment; (5) educational planning; (6) laying a reading foundation; (7) socialization of the young; (8) supporting a budding scientist; (9) creating a mathematical environment; (10) classroom attitudes; (11) setting achievement goals; (12) self discipline; (13) medical problems interfering with learning or school performance; (14) help for dyslexia; (15) tips for better reading; (16) studying; (17) task sequence; (18) teen depression; (19) relieving the drudgery of learning difficult concepts; (20) encouraging underachievers; (21) parent-child games; and (22) choosing the right college. (HTH)

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PARENTING FOR EDUCATION

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PARENTING FOR EDUCATION

by

VIVIAN W. OWENS

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Dedicated with love
to April, Shea, and John.

CONTENTS

Introduction 1
Parental Attitudes and the Child's Learning Environment 3
Learning 5
Competent Learners 6
Manipulative Learning 7
Reading Foundation 8
Create A Mathematical Environment For Your Child, I 10
Reasoning Situations 12
Encourage Your Creative Thinker 14
Training Memory 16
Testing Success 17
Conversations 19
Vocabulary Enrichment 21
Control of Environment 23
Okay. He's In School. What Now? 25
Educational Planning 27
Experiences That Count 29
Writing Preparation 30
Activities Helpful In Laying Reading Foundation 32
Scope of Reading 34
Educational Games 35
Reading That You Act Out 37
Counting 38
Memory And Learning 39
Association 40
Socialization of Our Young 41
Give Vent To Your Budding Scientist 42
Information Storage And Retrieval 44
Create A Mathematical Environment, II 46
Classroom Attitudes 48
Setting Achievement Goals 49
Self Discipline 51
Reward Systems 53
Making The Recall 55
Making Long Words Short 56

Money Recognition 57
Are Medical Problems Interfering With Learning Or School Performance 59
Help For Dyslexia 61
Tips To Better Reading, I 62
Tips To Better Reading, II 64
Studying 66
Taking Time 68
Task Sequence 69
Be Quick 70
Overcoming Vagueness 71
Time Management 73
Focus Attention: Eliminate Distraction 74
Organization 75
Expect Something Good! 77
Making Arithmetic Touchable 78
Visualizing and Observing 79
Is Your Teen Depressed 80
Unreadiness In Children 81
Clashing With The Underachiever 83
"Apathetic" Underachiever 85
Unaware Optimist 87
Where Does Marcia Fit In 88
How To Relieve Drudgery When Learning Hard Concepts 90
Reinforcing Good Behavior 92
Create A Mathematical Environment, III 93
Parent-Child Games, I 95
Parent-Child Games, II 97
Parent-Child Games, III 99
Activities For The Young 101
Showing Favoritism 103
Right Channels 104
Aim 105
Financing A College Education 107
Choosing The Right College 109
About The Author 112

INTRODUCTION

PARENTING FOR EDUCATION is an educational how-to book written in simple, easy-to-understand language. There are seventy-seven concepts, each presented as a separate article.

Through these articles parents learn how to recognize a disorganized child, but they also learn how to organize the disorganized child. How-to ideas on creating a mathematical environment are described. Practical guidelines for starting learners on the right track are offered: Writing foundations, reading rights, reasoning logically, training the memory, etc.

Motivational by nature, the purpose of PARENTING FOR EDUCATION is to influence parents to play an important role in their children's education. Parents are shown how to engage in activities with their children at home that upgrade academic performance at school. At the root of each article is the idea that this is a specific problem confronting some learners; the problem has a solution, and here it is.

Who benefits from PARENTING FOR EDUCATION? Mostly, parents of children between 0 and 10 years of age. But parents of a sixth grader or teenager will find useful suggestions. In fact, nuts-and-bolts information awaits exploration for any parent who wants the best for her child.

PARENTAL ATTITUDES AND THE CHILD'S LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We all learn better if we feel comfortable and secure; children are no exception.

A happy, well adjusted child responds to any environment in a positive direction. It is up to parents to see that children feel loved and cared for. This makes them happy and well adjusted. This lays the foundation for learning.

How do we show our children love?

1. By holding and snuggling the newborn through infancy as much as possible. Don't be afraid you're spoiling him. In fact, any child up to five years old needs a great deal of holding, snuggling, and hugging and kissing. Let it be a give-take love. Allow him to hug you when he feels like it. All this is called "healthy touching." School age children, whether third grade or high school junior, also need affection and show of concern.

2. Laugh often. Laughing is infectious, and it spreads a joyful spirit throughout the child's being.

3. Smile at him for no reason at all. It shows your good feelings about him—that he is a worthwhile, important individual just because he is himself. Smile also to show you are particularly pleased with him for a special reason.

4. Play with him every chance you get. The kind of play will naturally depend on the age group. If he's one year old or older, join in with his activity. Let him be the leader, dictating to you. Your third grader might enjoy a game of basketball and your high school junior would enjoy a board game with you once in a while.

5. Speaking to your child in tender, loving tones assures him that he is in friendly, kindly territory.

6. Telling a child that you love him has to be the warmest and best assurance he gets from you.

7. Let us not be negligent in taking care of their physical needs. Food, shelter, and clothing should be their right.

8. Children should not have to contend with adult problems. Don't burden them with problems out of their control.

Parental attitudes can have a positive effect on the child's learning environment. Healthy, positive parental attitudes stimulate healthy, positive attitudes in children.

LEARNING

Learning is the most important function of childhood and of youth, and it is the only means of achieving an education. We learn through formal and informal settings.

Formal settings are usually classrooms.

Informal settings can be anywhere, anytime, with anyone, at home, at church, in front of the television set, with Mom and Dad, with friends. Informal settings are usually unplanned experiences.

Informal learning can be as meaningful and as much fun as formal. That type of learning began the moment your child was born, and it continues through life. Therefore, take charge of your child's learning experiences—plan them, guide them. Here are a few tips:

> If you have a baby, begin talking clearly to him right now. Sing to him. Read to him. Move him about. Let him see. Let him touch.
>
> If you have a toddler or preschooler, read to him. Talk to him. Take him to the zoo or the circus or to any interesting place. Expose him to different forms of culture. Give him a hobby.
>
> If you have children five to ten years of age, read to them. Let them read to you. Play games. Take them to interesting places. Tell them about their family tree. Teach them your morals and values. Teach them your hobby.

Let us think about some of the things we want our children to learn in informal settings. Think what they might learn just idly watching men build at a construction site or watching a jeweler repair a watch. Under these relaxed conditions, you are able to engage their reasoning powers and imagination skills leading them toward memory, perception, intelligence, and other behaviors necessary in learning how to learn.

COMPETENT LEARNING

The best learners in school or on the job or elsewhere are those who want to learn, those who believe they can learn, and those who are willing to learn.

Where does that desire and belief and willingness come from?

You, the parent, can inspire your child to learn. Start by giving him confidence in himself. At the end of a day ask him what he's learned in a particular subject (social studies). Let him tell you about it, and while he's telling you, show interest. Show interest and patience. Then, praise him. Let him know how wonderful it is for him to learn.

When you know your child is required to learn his multiplication tables, offer a reward along the path to the finished product. For instance, after he learns his two's, reward stickers. Three's, reward movie or recreational treat. Four's, small toy is appropriate. Five's, reward a favorite book.

Build your child's confidence by making him competent. Competence comes by studying and learning. Learning gets to be a habit after some practice.

Confident, competent learners have the added benefit of good self image. Isn't this what you want for your precious child?

MANIPULATIVE LEARNING

A tall-tale teller might try to convince you he picked up an elephant and sat him in handwoven basket, or he might try to convince you that a rhinocerous weighs the same as a canary. But you would know he was lying, for you have a sense of comparative weights. You know what's heavy, and what's extremely heavy, and what's light weight or medium weight.

How did you develop this sense of comparative weights?

Undoubtedly, you learned through experiences of picking up or trying to pick up certain objects. So, let it be for your young ones. Allow them to manipulate objects around your home: picking up and holding, touching, pushing. Manipulation draws the child into making use of his intelligence. Lack of manipulation during preschool years slows your child's later learning abilities.

By touch alone, a toddler can learn to distinguish rough textures from smooth or grainy or slimy ones; he's able to identify warm, cool, soft, or dry. Active handling of objects is a precondition for a child's conceptual understanding and use of numbers.

Much of the manipulative experience takes place through play, and children learn best through play. Perhaps, as we play with a preschooler, we can incorporate the following activities:

1. Tying knots
2. Holding tiny objects and arranging them in different positions.
3. Placing pegs in a pegboard.

The next time your little one pushes a chair across a floor, clap for him. The more he manipulates the better his understanding of the world around him.

READING FOUNDATION

Although some children are natural readers, most require help. Methods of teaching reading are as varied as the children learning to read, but generally they all employ sight or sound techniques—maybe both. In learning to read, a child uses purely mental tasks involving an interpretation of ideas from graphic symbols.

As in any building, certain foundation is essential:

* Child must have a sense of direction, as in moving from left to right.
* Child must have eye-hand coordination.
* Child must be able to recognize letters of the alphabet.
* Child must recognize a word as made up of letters.
* Child must recognize a sentence as made up of words.
* Child should be able to hear initial sounds of words.
* Child should be able to hear ending sounds of words.
* Child must be able to differentiate sounds of alphabet in their most familiar forms.
* Child should be able to hear the short vowel sounds in short, simple words.

Some incidentals to successful reading foundation might include: Imitative reading. A child who sees Mommy or Daddy, or other family reading will want to read. Continuous reading. Mommy or Daddy reading to Johnny on a daily basis will encourage him to read for himself later. Access to books. If you leave books down for your child to examine by himself, or if you buy books for him alone as gifts, rewards, surprises, or shopping present, he will know that reading is valuable.

Building a proper reading foundation takes years. You cannot rush to it when Johnny starts school and expect immediate results. Talking to and reading to the very

young child on a daily basis will gradually build the skills listed under essentials. And the incidentals to successful reading must also begin with the very young child long before school is thought of. In committing yourself to building this foundation, you will learn to take the time to explain words or sounds that are not clear to the child. You will also develop techniques of teaching him that work and show results.

A proper reading foundation is necessary for able-bodied readers.

CREATE A MATHEMATICAL ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR CHILD, I

"Math is hard. I just don't get it," Suzy says. Eric supports her statement by saying, "I don't expect to get good grades in math. Mom says she never understood it."

Don't we all look forward to the day when children will say, "Math is simple. It's like taking candy from a baby."

Poor progress and wilting frustration over math can be avoided if parents began exposing their children to concepts of mathematics at an earlier age. Exposure involves looking at numbers and the way they work in terms of things the child sees, feels, touches, and hears. The child makes this sensory response best under comforting, normal circumstances without pressure. He learns math as part of his usual, daily routine; he is made aware of number relationships within the simple network of family living.

Here's how:

* When the table is being set, let the child help. Rather than saying, "Get out plates and forks," you say, "Get out four (4) plates and four (4) forks." Show him to associate a number with a set of objects. Count out loud, pointing and touching as you go along.

* When family members are going to be absent from the dinner table, allow the child to tell you how many people you need to prepare for.

* Make estimates of distance in terms of feet and yards if you're around home. While in a car, on the bus, or walking, speak of the distance from one place to another in terms of miles or fractional miles.

* Invite your child to help you make cookies. He can learn to add, multiply, and divide without ever using these terms. Select recipes that call for easily handled numbers.

For example: One recipe bakes 45 cookies. Take out 3 long cookie sheets. Allow the child to decide how many cookies each sheet will hold, how many cookies to place in a row, and how many rows.

* Measuring utensils offer an introduction to or practice with conversion units.

* On the day before marketing, persuade your fifth grader to look over the sale sheet of the newspaper. Discuss how much it costs to buy 3 gallons of milk if the price of one gallon is $2. Decide whether to buy Brand X or Brand Y which has comparable quality, if Brand X costs 3 cans for 90¢ and Brand Y costs 4 cans for $1.

* Ask Diane to hang clothes vertically or to lay something horizontally. In play, suggest that she line up two pencils or two chairs at an angle. Help her to cut out square pieces of nubby fabric. Toss her a cube of ice.

Mathematical language used in hands-on activities helps the child to make recall or association later during abstract problem-solving.

* In sharing candy or cutting pies, show ½ candy bar or ¼ pie. Illustrate fractional parts by reading one-third of a book to your child or by picking up one-tenth of his toys.

As commonplace as the examples above are, they demonstrate addition, subtraction, fractions, and division. Always keep numbers simple and solutions logical. Do not get too involved. Let it go for other times if he doesn't comprehend what you're saying.

Special time doesn't have to be set aside for teaching concepts using this approach, because you incorporate math activities into your daily routine by being aware that you can. Begin math language and activities with the toddler. If yours is older, start there.

REASONING SITUATIONS

Encourage your child of any age to develop his reasoning abilities. Reasoning entails making sense out of a situation and bringing logic to bear on a set of facts.

Following are examples of how-to:

* Give Molly a set of facts and allow her to draw a conclusion: All seeds contain baby plants. Plants have many ways of sending their seeds to far away places. Wind carries some seeds; people carry seeds; water carries some seeds; animals carry seeds. A tiny island is far from land, but it has trees growing on it. How do you suppose the trees got there?

* Give Tommy instructions:

1. Use short sticks to build your house.
   (you have given him a pile of long sticks.
2. Hand crumbs to the birds, Tommy.
   (Two whole slices of bread are on the table.)

* Set up physical obstacle courses. Arrange a starting point and a finishing point.

* Present him with physically unequal circustances. His task is to make them equal.

1. Two water pails — 1 empty, 1 half full.
2. Two slices of bread — 1 buttered, 1 unbuttered.

* Acquaint him with riddles.

* Provide games. All sorts of board games are on the market for preschool children. Candyland Bingo, checkers, Toss Across, Trouble, etc. Building toys and games are especially good. Any game can be instrumental in teaching the young child to reason. To get the most from it, an adult or older child should play these games with the child.

Simple games like "Which hand is it hiding-in" or "Guess this" or "Find-it" serve purposes in reasoning. Treasure hunts are wonderful when kept simple enough for the child's age group.

• Assign him an everyday task. Even two and three year olds can have chores as long as the parent keeps an open mind. Picking up after himself, putting away toys in assigned places, wiping up spilled milk, picking up paper from floor before parent vacuums, etc. are possibilities.

A regular chore or an expected chore that results from his actions teaches him small, incidental reasoning skills.

ENCOURAGE YOUR CREATIVE THINKER

"Stubborn" Jane, "Curious" John, "Contrary" Mary, "Independent" Michael, "Adventurous" Bobby, "Nonconforming" Winston, and thousands of their kindred who march to the beat of a different drummer are misunderstood by the majority. They are creative thinkers. If their spirits aren't broken before they reach adulthood, they will invent something useful, compose a great symphony, discover a scientific principle, approach medical problems with new insight, and they will contribute immeasurably to the betterment of society.

But many creative children will reach their peak at fourth grade and steadily decline to a status of noncreative. Their problem lies with being accepted. They quickly realize that their ideas are viewed as "wild or silly"; they recognize your irritation over their questioning attitude and their unwillingness to accept things on mere say-so. Being accepted into the family fold, or the peer group, or the classroom structure is as important to creative youngsters as it is to most children.

Parents need to encourage their creative youngster. Actually, he's delightful company—humorous, intuitive, self starter, receptive to other's ideas, and never bored. Seek to understand him. Invite him to share his ideas and goals with you. Appreciate his preoccupation with a problem.

It isn't always easy living with the creative youngster, particularly if you like order, for many in this group feel less need for discipline and orderliness. They can perceive an order in their mess, while you are baffled by it.

Unless the creative child receives encouragement and understanding from home, he will find trouble in store at school. Here's why: Many are daydreamers; their daydreaming prevents them from listening to important discussions

in classroom or from taking good notes. Many are divergent thinkers; they can see several "right" answers to test questions. Help the daydreamer or the divergent thinker by correctly analyzing his central problem. Get to the heart of the problem, whether it is work habits, poor listening during lectures, or answering questions in a conventional manner. Recognize that his creativity is not the problem, but it may give rise to problems.

The world needs more creative people. Be pleased if your child is creative. Encourage him; don't destroy his creativity.

TRAINING MEMORY

To spur the memory and get it kicking, there must be interest and usefulness. The young child and the school age child benefit from memory training.

The first step in training the memory is isolation.

Is it a name or a face you want the child to remember? Is it a fact, a numerical formula, a scientific equation, an historical event that needs to be committed to memory? Teach him to isolate. For example: Hand the child a picture containing five or more faces. Let him look at the entire picture for a few seconds. Now point out one face in the picture. Ask him to look carefully at the face for a minute. Take the picture away.

Ask him for some details about that face: Face shape? Any unusual feature? Color of hair? Color of eyes? How much hair? Teeth? How well did he do?

Now, hand the picture back to him. Ask him to mark X on the face for memory. Ask him all the questions you asked before.

Encourage the child to tell you a story about the face he sees. The next day see if he has memorized that face.

The process he went through is called isolation. He has eliminated all other faces from importance and concentrated on that single face.

This is the first step to take in teaching the child to memorize anything. Won't you try face memorizing with your child?

TESTING SUCCESS

Tests are here to stay. Their value is interwoven into all of life's schemes for progress. Most are designed to measure specific skills within a subject area, and the results are used to map out individual learning programs.

Commonly when children mention to parents they are having a test, they're referring to teacher-made tests. These tests generally come after a certain amount of information has been taught. They show how well the child is progressing and reveal weak areas of knowledge. A parent looking over a child's test should be concerned about any apparent weaknesses and take steps to see that the child consults his teacher for greater depth or to reteach that topic. If that isn't possible, parent should work with the child herself or get help.

Standardized tests occur less frequently. Their purpose is to measure student peformance in relation to students elsewhere taking the same test. It is a uniform measure irrespective of teachers, schools, or districts.

In that category, you have achievement tests and aptitude tests. Achievement tests measure how much the child has already learned in a subject, and compares how much he has learned with respect to other students.

Reading, mathematics, spelling, language, science, and social studies are subject areas generally measured.

Aptitude tests measure a student's ability to learn in school. A wide range of skills considered necessary for success in subject areas are tested.

I.Q. tests are the aptitude tests most of us are familiar with.

Although these tests are designed to predict a student's ability to learn in school, past achievement or acquired knowledge and skills definitely affect results.

Underlying elements in most testing are: Ability to read critically with comprehension, prior exposure to specific knowledge and concepts, ability to concentrate, and emotional factors having roots in self confidence and relaxation.

Parents have a great opportunity to become better informed about testing by consulting school guidance counselors and teachers. Testing success is important to every child.

CONVERSATIONS

Most of baby's wakeful, playful hours are spotted with moments of babbling. Babbling is a language in its own right. It has rhythm and pitch according to the object baby is addressing. Quite often baby can be observed babbling softly to his own hand as he holds it in the air. At other times he can be seen babbling quickly in high pitch to a wheeled toy which keeps moving away from him. This babbling is paced by the patterns he has imitated from significant others.

Because he is already partaking in the communication network, imitating speech patterns and listening, he is eager to engage in a dynamic one-on-one conversation. Conversation with baby is only an extension of the talks mother began with the one-day old infant. The main difference is that now you expect him to answer.

Expect baby to answer and he will answer. Say something to him and wait a few seconds for him to answer. When he answers, you say something again, then wait for him to answer again. Continue this procedure for five or more minutes.

Eye contact is essential. Laugh during the course of conversation. Make expressions with your face and hands in your normal manner as when conversing with another adult. This kind of exchange gives baby a full appreciation of your awareness of him as an individual and of his importance.

The more you engage baby in conversations, the more socialized he becomes. Experience shows that conversation contributes to broadening mental development and quickening mental alertness. The reasons are obvious: (1) Anytime anyone talks with you for several minutes, you use imagination to picture places or events described. (2) Conversation uses recall and memory of previous experiences linked to the present topic. (3) Language in its

diversity of sounds and uses acclimatizes an individual to his enviroment.

Try to remember that conversation with peers involves a variety of sentences. Don't mainly state facts, ask questions, too. Show surprise sometimes. Vary the tone of your voice to fit the content. And be interesting. Baby will definitely respond if you're interesting.

VOCABULARY ENRICHMENT

Do your best to enrich baby's vocabulary. Give him talk. Give him words. Give him sentences. Give him stories. Vary your talk to give him a varied view of his interesting world. Deliberately sit with him for minutes at a time clearly "locking words into his mind."

Point out a chair to baby and call it a chair, over and over again. Encourage baby to say, "Chair." Work on getting him to say "Chair" for a couple of weeks. Point out milk to baby and call it "Milk," over and over again. Encourage baby to say, "Milk," and applaud his effort. Point out anything in baby's environment which might interest him.

Name objects as you pass by them inside of your home. Name objects as you walk along inside of a grocery store, bank, theatre, Burger King, etc. Name objects as you drive down the highway. Be persistent.

Call out people's names when you greet them in front of baby. Call out people's professional names if they're dressed in their professional uniforms—police, fire persons, baker, doctor, nurse, hairdresser, etc.

Familiarize baby's vocabulary with names of common animals. Perhaps you live in a neighborhood with a fair population of dogs or cats, enough to acquaint baby with their general look. Those living in smaller cities and towns might have daily contact with squirrels, birds, rabbits, ducks, and horses in addition to cats and dogs.

Acquaint baby with the names of places he frequents. Store, doctor's office, church, beach, laundry, shoe shop, shopping mall, parks, etc. are places he will easily learn to say because he can identify them. Even acquaint him with certain words associated with specific places. For instance, on his visits to the doctor's office, he has contact with a nurse and he hears about medicine.

Enriching baby's vocabulary can be very exciting. You proceed on a trial and error basis, as you can't be certain what sounds will roll off more easily from his tongue. Exposure to different phonetic sounds is an absolute must to the child's intelligence.

CONTROL OF ENVIRONMENT

Giving a baby the feeling he is in control of his environment is not an easy thing to do, especially as most parents resist granting even a minute's worth of decision making to young children.

Decision making on simple matters like what to eat, or what to play, or where to sit is the first part of a series of devices the eight to eighteen month old baby seeks in getting control of his environment. His brain tells him he has power to choose, and he wants that power.

He needs that power in order to develop into a self assured, self-directed individual. His power over his environment need not diminish your power. Rather, it should complement yours and should be viewed as a joint venture. In this respect, you maintain position as overseer, thus ensuring baby's safety.

Control of environment implies that the overseer grant two important rights to baby: Freedom to do and comfort to do.

Freedom to do means that mother allows baby to go where he wants, to choose his objects of interests, to choose his activities, and to carry out his activities on chosen objects in chosen locale. It means restraints are lifted—physical and emotional.

He exercises the right to choose his favorite book during reading time, to choose orange juice instead of apple juice, to bathe now rather than later, to walk rather than ride in his stroller, to play alone instead of in a group, to hold onto his toys rather than sharing them.

In a hundred different ways baby assumes a leadership role wherein he chooses and dictates. With provisions furnished by mother, he will quickly learn an infinite amount about his own likes and dislikes as well as something about how his behavior influences other's behavior.

Many times aggressive behavior is going to dominate his personality, but this should be accepted as a positive sign in his growth pattern. That kind of behavior has a distinct and superior value in molding leadership characteristics. Leadership characteristics do not suggest bossy, domineering, repugnant people. They suggest people who are capable of handling their problems; people who meet their responsibilities; people who can manipulate any situation to the best advantage.

In order for a child to reach the point of being termed "aggressive" or "leader," he has to be reared in a nurturing environment which fosters his controlling of his environment.

Nurturing environments realize how much baby needs "Comfort to do." "Comfort to do" describes the quality of attitudes which prevail around baby during his moments of "doing."

Attitudes which give him comfort are saturated with understanding of his needs, kindness, and willingness to stand out of the way. He is alert to attitudes by way of voice tones, facial expressions, general mood and by direct commands.

If the idea of allowing the baby to control his environment causes you to tremble with fear that you may be "Sparing the rod and spoiling the child," consider some observations: (1) Most children who feel in control of their environments gain a sense of self worth and better adapt to learning socially acceptable behavior. (2) Most children who feel in control of their environments can be approached on a reasoning level more maturely than their counterparts.

What do you say to baby's control of his environment? Are you willing to try it? Good Luck!

OKAY. HE'S IN SCHOOL. WHAT NOW?

You've probably done a good job with your child up to this point. With the advent of school, many parents falsely believe, "It's now up to the teacher. She'll teach Johnny. I don't have anything to worry about." The fact is: Johnny is still yours and you had better keep an eye on him. You are the overseer of his education. Your diligence might make the difference between his success or failure.

Successful learners need strong moral support. Going off to school is not easy for a lot of little ones; they would rather be curled up in front of the television or out playing with pets. When they find themselves in a strange new world of unfamiliar faces and rules and regulations and extra demands, they want to take wings and fly away. Insecurities, jealousies, missing nap time, missing Mommy and baby sister, missing a special snack all add up to an unhappy beginning.

Offer your child moral support by being tuned in to his feelings about school. Allow him to vent his frustrations or anger. Sympathize. Empathize. Listen. Ask what you can do to help.

At the backbone of your moral support is your own awareness of the school you've enrolled your child in. Have you studied the school's policy handbook? Do you know the principal? Did you go up to the teacher and introduce yourself? Do you know the curriculum plan for your child's grade? Do you know the schedule of activities for the school year? Have you taken the time to look through textbooks? What about snacks and lunches?

If your awareness passes muster, you probably have a good attitude about the educational system. Great! Every child needs a parent with a good attitude about the whole process of education, for a parent's good attitude rubs off on the child. We owe it to each child to instill positive

values about educational institutions, his teachers, his classmates, his books and lessons. Since most of waking hours will be spent in school for the next twelve years, he should enjoy the place.

Parent, your child needs you.

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Aspirations for career and education should begin while children are very young. This plants the seed for wanting to achieve and setting goals. In this way planning becomes a joint venture between child and parent; motivation is equally shared.

Educational planning concerns all the efforts you make to develop your child's academic potential from babyhood to adulthood. It concerns looking ahead and looking out for his best. In early grades do whatever is necessary to help the child learn to read and do basic math. Reading skills underlie any learning that takes place in other subjects and ultimately determines school success. It is better to get tutorial help for reading by third grade if a child is very weak rather than wait until junior high.

If a child can't read well, he usually remains in low skills groups. College-bound courses will be out of his reach.

By grade four let your child's teacher know that college is in future and you want to ensure right preparation. Encourage child to earn good grades and to develop good study and work habits so that teachers will know he's college material.

"Tracking" for college is definitely in process during junior high. Investigate the level of English or math that your child is placed in. Ask questions. Keep an eye on his progress.

Decide what extracurricular activities you can provide for your child. The school system itself has organizations that offer involvement. Colleges want well-rounded students in addition to students who have good grades and good entrance scores.

Look into financial savings plans as early as possible. Savings accounts, insurance programs, investments, etc. toward college will come in handy regardless of how much you set aside.

As the child approaches high school start thinking in terms of qualifying for the college of your choice. This means college-bound courses and good grades. It also means scholarship tests and college entrance exams by senior year.

Register your child for PSAT at the beginning of eleventh grade. If his score on that is high enough, he will be eligible to take the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. And register for SAT and other college entrance examinations during the Spring of eleventh grade.

If educational planning seems to require your attention, give it your best. Planning allows you to answer, "What will my child grow up to be?" Certainly, he will come close to the mark.

EXPERIENCES THAT COUNT

Tom Sawyer or Huck Finn could set your ears on fire by telling you their experiences. And if you followed Alice through Wonderland, your eyes would light up in amazement. But what about your child's experiences? The eight to twelve year old needs experiences that count.

He's in the middle years, far from being a baby and light years from teenhood. He's at a good stage for learning and profiting from new adventures.

Take him to the museum. Let him browse and search out targets of interest to him. Is there a zoo within 150 miles of your home? Consider a boy's excitement as he compares the jungle strength of a puma with that of a tiger. There's nothing like seeing animals in the flesh. How about a circus or fair?

Ever thought of giving him a bus ride, train ride, or maybe a helicopter ride? The shorter the distance, the less you pay, but the experience will be the same.

Do you know anyone who goes fishing? See if your daughter can tag along. She might enjoy digging bait and hooking it on to a fishing pole, then watching the ingenius fish nibble the bait and get away.

A magician's show, a ventriloquist performance, a juggler's act, an art show, a gem and mineral show, a band concert, a play, a walk through the woods, a hike up a mountain, a tour through a cave.

Some experiences allow him to be a participant; others allow him to be a spectator. All experiences can add new meaning to his life.

WRITING PREPARATION

Eventually most children will write. It doesn't really matter how early a child writes, as long as he is not forced or pressured.

Experience shows that whether you do anything or not, under normal circumstances, the child will train himself to write. His techniques may not produce letters legible enough to be school-approved, but he will probably understand them. The reason he eventually writes, help or not, is because of fine motor skills he picks up day to day. Following are some activities you can provide, easing the gateway to writing: Forming letters with toothpicks or yarn. Hammering and nailing, rolling pin-play dough, threading needle and sewing, finger gripping exercise, finger painting, spinning jacks, using rice or beans in art design, clay play, water play, ball play, and anything else resembling these activities.

Supply your child with plenty of paper and pencils or crayons. If you can, supply a chalkboard and chalk. Assemble tops from jars and show her how to trace around the tops. Intersect the tracing to form new pictures. Encourage the child to color in the pictures he makes. Tracing around cups or small boxes or jars prove equally fun. Tracing and coloring in the contours develop the child's muscular control; and he is using many of the same strokes later used in writing.

After several weeks of tracing, encourage her to form letters freely. But sit with her frequently in the beginning to ensure that she is using the simplest motions.

Another preliminary step to writing involves touching and tracing sandpaper letters. Guide the index finger of the child's right hand over the sandpaper in the motion of actual writing. Repeat this step with eyes closed.

Writing doesn't have to be a struggle for Mary or Johnny. It can be a pleasure for the little ones who have engaged in finger strengthening activities as described above. Parents can make the difference.

ACTIVITIES HELPFUL IN LAYING A READING FOUNDATION

The following are activities that will benefit your pre-reader. A pre-reader is any child who is not reading or who is just beginning to read. He can be four years old or he can be seven or eight years old.

I. Eye Training. Teach child to distinguish shapes, colors, figures, chairs, and ears. Encourage him to find small details that will identify one object from a similar object.

II. Eye Training Movements. Bouncing a tennis ball continuously trains the eyes to move rapidly and in directions. Rolling any size ball from side to side or back and forth trains and controls eye muscles.

III. Watching for familiar signs. While riding or walking you can ask your child to help you out by looking for a specific sign. If you're going to a Burger King or McDonald's get your youngster to point out the sign when you arrive. STOP signs and other traffic signs are good signs to start.

IV. Pointing To Specific Alphabets In Words. Right, smackdab in the middle of reading her a favorite book, stop and say, "Keesha, point to the "t" in cat, or find all the "a's" on this page.

V. Let The Newspaper Be Happy Hunting Ground. Give Keesha a red marker and ask her to circle as many "c's" as she can find. Or, given large blocked letters on a word card, gently tell her to point out any alphabets she knows and name them.

VI. Left To Right Eye Movements. Instruct child to hold up his right hand eight inches from his face (about midway between his eyes). Move right hand to far right. Drop hand. Bring up right hand again, repeat movement. Repeat five times.

Touch child's finger to printed page. Guide his finger over words, sentences, paragraphs, going from left to right. You need not read as you guide.

Have fun and he will have fun, too.

SCOPE OF READING

Surround a child with books and he will surely read. Reading can provide many hours of pleasure in variety of forms. Fantasy stories are especially popular among the younger children. Jokes and riddles always interest primary grade youngsters. Informational books, particularly science, appeal to preschoolers as well as preteens—but at a different level of understanding. Sports and hobby books, poetry books, biographies, religious books, and adventure stories have always found a place.

Books that are purely informative such as dictionaries, almanacs and atlases, and encyclopedias are books every child over three should be familiar with.

Children's magazines like Cricket, Highlights, Ranger Rick's nature magazine, or Children's Digest contain nonfiction articles, stories, puzzles, and information that will interest your youngster.

But whatever the book, we, the parents, are guides for our children's reading until they're around sixth grade. Through the proper selection of books we have opportunities to broaden our children's interests, expand their vocabularies, further their interests in particular areas, discover interests, and instill values. Too important to overlook is the fact that books provide solid information. They impart knowledge.

Of course, you may not be a book lover. Even so, you can help establish a child's healthy, positive attitudes toward books. What he needs is your gentle persuasion that books are really nice little friends.

EDUCATIONAL GAMES

Playtime is very important to young minds. It allows creative, intellectual expression as well as motor development. And, we, parents, should not intrude on playtime with our suggestions and our ways of doing—most of the time. Playtime without intrusion is called Freeplay.

At other playtimes we can introduce our children to educational games. Educational games educate. They possess built-in strategies for awakening or developing specific skills. Some of these games require parental guidance, others the child is self directed.

What can educational games teach?

1. Color for the preschooler. Example: You and child can make a game of finding all the blue towels in the linen closet.

2. Counting and number recognition. Example: Ask child to find two shoes that look alike. Or challenge child to stack sets of 3 books faster than you. For number recognition, collect pictures that contain an easily determined number of things and write the numeral beneath these things.

3. Thinking and reasoning. Example: Candyland Bingo, checkers, mazes, puzzles, Connect Four, and other store bought games can be taught to children as young as three years old.

4. Memory. Example: Card games, flash cards, etc.

When selecting educational games, here are a few considerations:

1. Age group. Let it be appropriate for your child.
2. Level of difficulty. No educational game should be so hard that it discourages or bores the child. Quite often, parents need to work through games to make sure they understand them well enough to demonstrate to child.

3. Time factor. If it's too long, the child gets wiggly and will not want to play with it again.

4. Guidance requirement. Can it be used alone? If it can't be used alone, will you be available to assist or show child what to do? Can an older child or another family member play with the child using this game?

5. Accessibility. Can the child get to it easily? If it's located in a place that he can easily get to, he will want to play with it. Storage? Neatness responsibility?

Incorporate educational games into your child's life pleasures.

READING THAT YOU ACT OUT

Who can resist a game? Throw in a little drama, too, and you've got a first rate drama-game called "Act It Out."

That's it: Hold up a placard and instruct Betsy to do what the card says. Each time she correctly does what the card says, she receives a goldie point.

What's on the card? Each card is a one word command. Bite. Run. Stand. Jump. Or two word commands: Hit ball. Tell story. Sing song. Please knock. Or three word commands: Lift your leg. Brush my hair. Write a number.

When shown card, child has to obey command, act out words printed on card. After accumulating a certain number of goldie points, child receives a reward.

Visual communication to promote reading can be a lively, joyful activity. Be as creative as you wish in designing cards. Size of lettering and color of card stimulate children's senses. Be careful not to use words that are too long for the child to decipher.

COUNTING

Number concepts have their beginnings in the counting ritual. Almost before a baby can talk, someone is asking, "How old are you?" Others are saying, "How many teeth do you have?" Or, "How many fingers can you hold up?" Baby is inundated with so many remarks about "How many?" that counting can be approached very naturally.

Exposure to mathematics in general involves looking at numbers and their functions in terms of things baby can see, feel, and touch. It involves adapting baby to an awareness of arithmetic forms already present in the home. So, counting is a good place to begin.

Count his toes. Count his fingers. Clearly calling out each number, touch a different toe or finger as you go along demonstrating for him how numbers name the amount of things you have. Sit with him on the floor and count blocks into separate groups. Get him to count aloud with you.

When you exercise, count loud enough for baby to hear you. When you're putting on his shoes, count the shoes before you put them on. When you're taking potatoes out of a bag for cooking or preparing tomatoes for a salad, count them.

In other words, become an oral counter where the situation permits. Never let an opportunity pass you by. The more baby sees you counting and understands how you are counting—by associating numbers with a specified amount—the better he will grasp the meaning.

Caution: Start off with very small amounts. Slow is better than fast. Patience and gentleness work wonders.

Do rote counting with your three to seven year old child. Teach him at a leisurely pace to count from 1 to 14 or as high as he can, retaining it all. Get the sequence correct. Rote counting is good memory work and familarizes the child with the names of numerals, enabling him to greet old friends as he encounters written work.

MEMORY AND LEARNING

Memory and learning are interwoven in an extremely complicated manner. Recalling a multiplication fact involves a combination of mental processes. A child's ability to gather and assimilate multiplication facts supports how effectively he will memorize the fact and later recall it.

Isolating is the first step in training memory.

For young children up to eight years old, isolate a nursery rhyme or short poem. As you show your child a picture depicting JACK BE NIMBLE, read the nursery rhyme in the liveliest voice you can project. Afterward, take it sentence by sentence, having the child repeat each sentence until he says it exactly. Allow him to repeat one sentence several times until it is committed to memory. Then, allow him to add on another sentence until he's able to repeat the entire rhyme without any help. Go over this rhyme every day for a couple of weeks.

Using this same technique you can train your child's memory to recognize alphabets, words, definitions, numbers, addition facts, subtraction facts, etc. Use memory to aid understanding in the learning process.

Memory is very important to total learning. Patience and continuous practice can improve your child's memory if you work with him—lovingly.

ASSOCIATION

Mother, father, show your child how to memorize by using association. Show him how to associate a fact with a rhyme, a number with a jingle, an historical event with a familiar event.

Remember how you learned the number of days in each month? 30 days hath September, April, June, and November. All the rest have 31, save February alone with 28.

And the colors of the spectrum I learned was ROY GBIV—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

Memory associations trigger recall. Play association games with children of all ages.

My favorite association technique is letter associations. The first letter of key words, statements, or facts cue you for important information. This will be particularly helpful to the child who is already spelling and has a keen sense of hearing.

Absurd connections strengthen the memory better for some. For example: You introduce your seven year old daughter to your boss, Bill Klunder, who says she's a good little boy. What a blunder—but that's Bill Klunder. You associate his name with his action or behavior.

In learning maps you teach your child to associate a section of the map or even a particular location with a special design or clue name bearing the first letter of each place in the section.

Associations for memory strengthen your child.

SOCIALIZATION OF OUR YOUNG

For the infant who is fed, cuddled, played with, and nurtured by a warm, easily recognized person, socialization stimulates learning. In building a strong bond with that warm person, the infant learns to relate to people. She learns others' reactions to her crying, to her babbling, to her smiles, to her direct stares. When the infant doesn't receive nurturing and doesn't form a strong bond with a warm, easily recognized person, her learning is short-circuited.

Social contacts with peers, older children, and adults during play, conversation, or other exchange set up a jet stream of response from and imitation of human models. As a result of these social contacts, even the two month old baby gets social rewards which act as incentives for her to copy specific behaviors.

What this says to the parent of a baby or toddler is: Develop a warm, one-on-one relationship with your baby—talk to her, cuddle her, laugh with her, play with her. Allow her to mingle with other children in varied age groups, and allow her to exchange with adults other than you.

To the parent of elementary and middle grade children, this says: Interact with your child—read to him, play games with him, talk over the day's events with him, listen to him, attend social functions together. Encourage him to have friends and associates; and see to it that he enjoys a quality relationship with older children and adults.

For parents of adolescents and older teens there is still a need for good quality social contacts. Keep up a warm, loving relationship with him, encourage his peer friendships, steer him to social exchange with adult role models.

GIVE VENT TO YOUR BUDDING SCIENTIST

Is there a future scientist in your home? Who is your child molding into? Surely, his environment, his experiences, his parents' attitudes are molding him.

When I look at a three year old building a bridge with Lego or hear a five year old pondering how to make a dye solution from wild berries, I glimpse a scientist in the making.

One day long ago George Washington Carver, little slave boy, tripped through some woods picking wild flowers, smelling them, observing them, capturing their beauty through drawing them. I wonder did anyone imagine there tripped a future scientist, destined to receive medals in chemistry and medals for valuable contributions to agriculture.

And how much encouragement did young Nicholas Copernicus get when he told his father he liked watching stars and other heavenly bodies at night? Did his parents tell him to shut up when he asked them to look at pictures he drew of the sun moving across the sky? I wonder did his parents or teachers have the slightest inkling that one day Nicholas Copernicus would be regarded as the founder of present-day astronomy.

Life stories of great scientists—those from very humble beginnings as well as those from wealthy backgrounds—always leave me wondering about children.

Budding scientists need a place to move freely, to explore freely, tinker and manipulate freely, to discover, to create, to think. They need a space where limitations are not set because Mommy wants to keep a neat house. They need time, unhampered, unconditional.

Budding scientists need things to play with. Simple things: Building blocks, blunted sticks, water, pots, pans, trucks, cars, play dough, puzzles, craft things, and any other toys you can get them. Of course, the older child might like an electronic kit, an ant farm, a junior telescope, or a junior chemistry set.

INFORMATION STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL

Have you poured water into a bucket lately? Have you poured milk into a measuring cup today? You can measure the volumes of a bucket or a measuring cup, right? But can you measure the volume of a child's learning capacity? Children are not buckets whose volumes are measureable.

It is foolish to say, "Joey can't learn anymore. He's learned all he's capable of learning." Joey is a unique individual. He may learn at a slower pace and in a different style from his classmates. Some days, he may be more attentive and retain more; and on other days, he may have problems—medical, emotional, physical, etc.—that prevent learning from being retained.

Unfortunately, children like Joey—especially those from minority and lower economic backgrounds—are labeled in classrooms across the country. Much of this has to do with the information storage a child brings to a formal educational setting. Many children possess a warehouse of information not useable within the academic framework they enter. What are they to do? How can they function successfully in a system they're not prepared to deal with?

The solution lies with parents. Parents must become advocates for their children well before they enter school. During the preschool years the parent must accept the role of teacher nature bequeathed.

As your child's first (and most important) teacher see to it that he is supplied with information and facts. Share your knowledge with him as he encounters different things or situations. Explain to him in a way that he can understand. Get others to share their knowledge with him.

When he asks a question try to answer him with real information. Read books to him—The Childcraft Series is a good starting place. Expose him to different environments; let him explore. Select and teach him information that will

lead to a good foundation in reading and arithmetic. Make information available to him that is of interest to the general public and that possibly has basis for subjects he will later learn in school.

You want him to cope in a world where his potential will be recognized. You want him to retrieve and use information he's stored to build up skills he will need to master his new environment.

CREATE A MATHEMATICAL ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR CHILD, II

Creating a home environment that says, "Math is fun and easy," takes conscious awareness, but the good attitude formed makes it all worthwhile. Conscious awareness requires the parent to deliberately make arithmetic forms visible in any household activity.

To make arithmetic forms more visible, set up a math center.

A math center can be a box of material and equipment set aside in a specific location to be used for math activities or it can be a table laid out with materials and equipment. It can be a shelf (or shelves) of materials and equipment. The purpose of the math center is to provide things for you and your child to work with which will clearly explain an operation like addition or any other concept.

What goes in the math center depends on how much you want to create for yourself and how much you want to purchase. Homemade materials are just as effective as storebought. A combination works best. Below is a list of materials and their possible use:

- Bean stick number rods. Popsicle sticks with dry pinto beans glued on. To be used for addition, subtraction, multiplication—and place value for older children.
- Sandpaper numbers. For number recognition and manipulation of arithmetic operations that are already understood.
- Buttons, beads, cloth glued on cut-out circles, etc. To be used as counters.
- Cardboard, poster board, or construction paper. Draw a number of colorful objects on both sides of poster board. Write the numeral beneath the picture. Hang this in child's bedroom, kitchen, or anywhere that child frequents.

- Toothpicks. Use to form numerals.
- Plastic ruler, measuring cup, measuring spoons. Use for measurement.
- Jar of coins. Use to teach money recognition and exchange values.
- Clean, empty food boxes with marked prices. For playing store—number recognition, addition, subtraction, multiplication.
- Shallow box with cardboard separators. Used to teach division. Fill box with X number of counters.
- Blackboard, chalk, eraser.
- Cardboard numerals, perforated, and colored yarn. Child will string yarn through holes, teaching him the best direction to follow in writing numerals as well as teaching numer recognition.
- Math activity books. For rote practice.
- Toy clocks, Children's Bingo, counting frames, Monopoly, and other math-related toys and games.
- Pencils, paper, crayons.
- Geometric shapes cut from textured fabric.
- Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and word problem cards. Print numbers large in red and/or blue. To be used for practice and rote memory.
- Magnetic numbers and symbols. Place on refrigerator for pre-schooler to manipulate at his will.
- Anything number-related that the child can handle.

It is hoped that such an environment produces the security necessary for him to grasp the principles of math as they are taught in the school classroom. Encourage your child to play with his math center, and encourage yourself to use it to better explain a concept.

CLASSROOM ATTITUDES

The Stradivarius is said to be the finest violin in the world, because it is the most finely crafted.

In order for our children to be the finest students in the world, they must have classroom attitudes that are finely crafted. Developing their good classroom attitudes is our concern.

Let us stress:

(1) Eagerness to learn.
(2) Listening attentively.
(3) No arguing. No playing around. No sleeping.
(4) Respect for the teacher and total school administration.
(5) Getting to class on time with everything that's needed.
(6) Setting achievement goals—academic attainments he wishes to make.
(7) Sincere committment to understanding.
(8) System of keeping track of assignments.

There are some measures we, as parents, can take to enhance our children's classroom attitudes. We need to communicate with our children to find out if they are receiving the right amount of guidance and instruction from their classroom teacher. If the child is having difficulties, let us talk with the teacher and find out what steps can be taken to overcome difficulties.

Keep a daily check on your child's grades—this lets you know where he needs help before a situation gets out of control. Find out when and attend parent-teacher conferences.

Offer a supportive attitude to your child and his teacher. Be willing to do whatever you can to make things better. Never condone bad behavior. Good behavior and good attitudes go hand-in-hand.

SETTING ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

In goal setting, parent and child must keep lines of communication open; and that involves deciding what goals to aim for. From the moment your daughter heads for the kindergarten door, you should be at her heels, leading her to reach for the best within her capabilities. Her sights should be set on accomplishments in basic skills—reading, writing, and arithmetic.

If yours is a kindergartener, you may have to set up her goals and talk to her later. Older children may participate in the goal setting. Begin by drawing up lists of most important, important, next-to-important, and not-so-important goals. Accomplishments of basic skills is understood to be at the root of all academic achievement goals.

Example:

Most Important
Reread class reading assignment after school. Answer all questions or problems at end of every section.

Important
Ask teacher questions I don't understand.

Next-to-Important
Study corrections teacher made on math test.

Not-so-Important
Get A's on all my written work.

After the goal list has been drawn up, parent and child need to decide whether to work for these goals on short term or long term basis; whether goals should be daily, weekly, monthly, or longer. Often it is easier to regard goals as attainable by taking one step at a time, keeping a short term, short range view. For example, if your child wishes to get an "A" for the six weeks in Arithmetic, it is perfectly okay to tape a placard on her mirror saying, "Toni will get "A" in math," but Toni has to have a daily goal of making "A's" in math, of doing her math homework,

of studying and reviewing. Setting and working for short term goals show Toni how to achieve longer term, more important goals. On a day-to-day basis she remembers her goals and is reminded to work toward them.

Goal setting will vary for each individual child. Its purpose is not to pressure or place stress. It is not to force a slow learner to expect academic feats of the gifted. It is to make the child aware that her going to school has purpose. That purpose is education. Education takes place daily. Each day she should see results signaling her work toward one goal that is part of a larger goal.

Will you investigate goal setting with your school-age child, whether she's a third grader or a high school senior?

SELF DISCIPLINE

There are so many values we can communicate to our children if they know we love them. One important value is self discipline. Self discipline is defined as careful control and training of oneself.

"T'ain't no easy thing to do," Paul Laurence Dunbar was fond of saying in his poetry. He could have been describing self discipline, for obstacles lay in the path of all who would seek it. But those obstacles must be overcome because of the importance of this value.

Obstacles like: Wanting your own way, or putting things off until tomorrow, or free spiriting that disregards future consequences, or tempting alternatives. Obstacles block concentration, determination, wisdom, and knowledge of right which are all required to gain control of self. Measures must be programmed into our children's behavior and thought processes to fight off obstacles.

Fighting off obstacles is part of teaching children about self discipline, and teach them we must. To train the child to say to himself, "I will get this project finished," or, "This chore is mine. It's up to me to do it," are techniques to get the wayward started. At the same time, when a child doesn't exhibit self discipline, the parent has to withdraw reward or praise.

In general, parents should begin teaching their children self discipline as early as the child begins to show outward emotions of anger, jealousy, resentment, and others that might lead to negative behavior.

Self discipline means sticking with a task until it is finished, even if the child gets tired and bored. It means not giving up when the task gets hard. In fact, when the task gets hard, the child has to learn to dig deeper within himself by further thinking or further reading or by asking questions

of authority sources. Sometimes when the task gets hard, the child may have to look at other ways of doing the task.

Let us work on motivating our children to develop self discipline. Let us do it with a heart full of love.

REWARD SYSTEMS

"Why should I give Patty a reward for making the honor roll?" one mother asked. Another mother asked, "When should rewards be given?" By using a reward system, a parent encourages certain behaviors in her child. Once a reward is received, it is memorized, and the child repeats the behavior.

That's true even for adults. Think of the kisses your child has bestowed upon you for having done something nice. Didn't you feel like doing that nice thing again? What about the bonus you got on the job for working overtime or for the safety suggestion you made? Whether you received bonuses or kisses, you were rewarded for certain behaviors, and you were pleased enough to want to repeat the performance.

Reward systems can take many forms. They should be geared to the child's age, needs, and availability. They don't have to be money; they can be special privileges, a popular stick-on or patch, a movie or special treat, a book, a visit to a special place, or a trip.

Should the mother give Patty a reward for making the honor roll? Yes. If this is Patty's first time making the honor roll, make a big hullaballoo of it. If she's an old timer at making the honor roll, her reward can be a hug with congratulatory remarks or a small, meaningful token, or maybe a special celebration cake or meal.

For the mother who asked, "When should a reward be given?" You probably know the answer already—At the completion of a successful endeavor. In many cases, parents will need to motivate their children toward successful endeavors by dangling the reward beforehand.

Consider a child who is having difficulty reading. Offer this incentive to him: I will listen to you read for one half

hour every evening. At the end of the week your reward for reading will be your choice of a football team pennant.

By rewarding or praising certain behaviors, you're strengthening positive characteristics.

MAKING THE RECALL

In by-gone days mothers clucked over their children's dinner plates, fussing about food to stick to the ribs. Today, clucking ought to be over knowledge sticking to the brain.

Partly, we rely on the memory to make knowledge stick to the brain.

After isolating an identity for memory, visualizing it, and associating it, the goal is to register and retain, ultimately to recall.

The child who is capable of writing needs to be persuaded to write things down. Writing registers an idea clearly in the mind.

Saying things out loud makes powerful images on the mind. The mind seems to take note of self speaking to self.

Encourage Johnny to engage his hearing, touching, smelling, or tasting along with his visual sense.

Rephrasing facts in her own words is a sure way for Mary Louise to remember the contents of her science book chapter.

During the week pause fifteen minutes with your high school son to review something he's just learned. Maybe he will get in the habit of reviewing shortly after an identity has been learned.

Other types of physical involvement—pantomiming or dramatization of a story, for example—firmly imprint important details on the brain.

Let us take memory seriously as we evaluate ways to improve our children's learning.

MAKING LONG WORDS SHORT

Is that word snail or snake? How do you pronounce that, Mom, experience or experiment? Captivate or captivity?

It happens often, doesn't it – children not looking fully at words? In their minds, the word is too long to pronounce, or they think they know it because the first three letters are familiar.

Help is on the way. Chop up long words. Digest only a short portion at a time. Write a long word like experience, by syllables, onto three cards. E-x on card one, p-e-r-i onto card two, and e-n-c-e onto card three. Get child to pronounce each syllable, looking only at the card containing that syllable. After he has pronounced each syllable separately, encourage him to pronounce the entire word without looking at written form.

Now, allow him to bandage the syllables together, then pronounce the word.

Next, go through the same procedure with a similar looking word.

Discuss the differences between the two words, helping the child decide the importance of looking carefully at the full length of a word.

Try this with many words over a period of several months, until you feel satisfied that the child is doing this on his own while reading or studying spelling words.

MONEY RECOGNITION

Toss some pennies in a jar. Let your preschooler hear the clink-clank. What was her reaction? Lay the pennies on a white background and zip them around a zig-zag trail as if they are little cars on a race track. Ask your preschooler to follow your trail with other pennies. Point out Abe Lincoln's bearded face and suggest that she pull his beard. Surely, she will be curious enough to study the penny for a half second. Then, after many half seconds she might just ask you for a penny.

The penny, nickel, dime, quarter, and half dollar are such common features in daily living we seldom think of explaining to a small child what they are and why they are used. We should explain, however. Even at the grocery store when the clerk is ringing up your bill, you can show your preschooler the money you're about to give the clerk and tell her how you're exchanging money for groceries, that you're paying for food. Don't worry that the small child won't understand your explanation. She's more perceptive than you think.

CAUTION: Never leave a baby or small child alone with money.

The three year old enjoys manipulating objects. Play store and other games with him, allowing him to handle money and to understand its purpose. If there are older children in the home get them involved with playing store with their younger sibling.

When you're in a store with Susie and she wants a candy bar, give her the money to pay for it. Show her the price marked on the candy bar, emphasizing that's the amount in her hands plus tax.

To help the three to seven year old clearly distinguish one coin from another, start a penny bank for her at the beginning of one month, helping her to count the pennies

occasionally. The next month start a nickel bank; then start a dime bank, quarter bank, and half dollar bank the following months.

Play exchange games with any age child. It only takes a minute or two. You give him a one dollar bill and tell him to give you ten dimes. Reverse the exchange.

Some days after you've been to the bank or at any time you have a lot of cash on hand, let Johnny count and handle your money.

64

ARE MEDICAL PROBLEMS INTERFERING WITH LEARNING OR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

You shake your head in frustration. You've punished Eddie for flying paper airplanes in school while the rest of the class reads a funny story. You've even taken the opposite fence; you've offered him a reward for reading along with the others. But teacher says Eddie's behavior is getting worse.

All this is hard for you to understand, because your Eddie has always been obedient and attentive. At home, he's still good, little Eddie.

Could be Eddie's undesirable classroom behavior has roots in other problems—problems he doesn't know how to solve.

Medical problems interfere with learning or school performance. Often, parents forget to consider medical reasons. Sometimes, they ignore them and refuse to admit they exist.

A child complaining of headaches, squinting, rubbing his eyes, getting close up on words, may have vision problems.

Inner ear problems may cause imbalance, wherein the child topples over occassionally.

Recurrent sore throat, mouth breathing, recurrent ear infections often indicate tonsil or adenoid problems. Hearing impairment may be present under these conditions and will only be relieved when the problem is treated.

Your bedwetter may not be as lazy as you think. He may have a bladder or kidney infection or a defect in the anatomical development of the urinary system.

Allergy. If Molly is beset with a fit of sneezing she probably missed out on teacher Jones instructions.

Has the teacher inquired about your daughter's tiredness? You explained that she went to bed at eight o'clock and got a full eleven hours' sleep. Consider a checkup if this continues. Extreme fatigue can be an alert to a more serious problem.

The above are only a sampling of medical disturbances that may be at the root of learning problems and poor school performances.

Some of the more noticeable medical problems demand attention quicker by their more visible symptoms. Of course, there are hidden diseases affecting many children — these cannot be detected easily by parent or teacher.

Let us be thorough detectives when it comes to investigating our children's learning problems. Medical problems do interfere with learning or school performance.

HELP FOR DYSLEXIA

In recent years help has been found for a disability known as dyslexia. You can recognize dyslexia best if your eight or nine year old continually writes a mirror image of his name and other words, if he writes letters upside down, or if he reverses the sequence of letters as they appear in words. Typical reversal errors might be "was" for saw.

Dyslexia is a reading disability. The dyslexic child has difficulty reading because he is seeing letters differently, thus seeing words differently. He has persistent spelling errors (especially misspelling the same familiar word different ways). Uncertain preference for right or left handedness, badly cramped, scrawled or illegible handwriting, confusion about up and down, yesterday and tomorrow are all signs of the dyslexic. But any one symptom, unless it is very severe, does not indicate a disability. Reading disability generally shows up in a cluster of symptoms.

Parents should pick up on the signs mentioned earlier, but don't diagnose without consulting a professional. The child's teacher, a reading consultant, a learning-disabilities specialist, an opthamologist, school psychologist, or pediatrician are a number of professionals who can steer you in the right direction in drawing up a remedial plan for your child's reading.

No remedial plan can be meaningful until a proper evaluation is carried out—an evaluation that includes an estimate of his intelligence level, present level of reading skills, quality of oral reading, and identifying characteristics of a learning disability.

If you notice some of these signs, do consult a professional first. At home, you can tutor him in areas the school program may not deal with intensely. Basic reading foundation skills like sounding out individual alphabets and using word cards such as "an" or "it" in combination with letter cards to form words.

TIPS TO BETTER READING

Practice makes perfect may be trite, but it's true. The more you do of anything, the better you do it. Reading is no exception. Good readers read frequently. Much depends on the child's age group.

The following suggestions are aimed at children who are already reading, however slightly:

1. If possible, make use of educational technology in the form of audio-visual material and equipment. Look for these in book stores, electronic shops, toy stores, general stores, or computer stores.
2. Play vocabulary games.
3. Visit the library. Child should use story cassettes and borrow story records for listening pleasure. Many records have follow-along books.
4. Use tape recorders. Have child to read poem, nursery rhymes, or stories for taping session. Later, he can listen to them at his own leisure.
5. Train child to create mental pictures as he reads or as he listens to reading.
6. Role play while reading.
7. Play sound games using certain vowel sounds, consonant blends.
8. Name as many words as you can that sound like sat—emphasize a.
9. Exercise your tongue with cl: See if you can cluck like a chicken.
10. Add different endings to cl.
11. Read nightly bedtime stories. Even older children (7-12 yrs.) sometimes enjoy an adult reading to them, perhaps a popular book that's been made into a movie.

12. Make spelling a fun-for-a-minute affair. While you're turning off the lights in Danny's bedroom, ask him to spell "light;" while he's going off on his bicycle, call out a couple of simple words. Fun-for-a-minute spelling means one or two words at off-guard moments.

TIPS TO BETTER READING, II

1. If an adult is reading to a child, don't confine reading material to simple vocabulary books and simple settings. As a listener, he enjoys a wider variety of style and interest.
2. Get her in the habit of reading food labels.
3. Ask him to read the directions to you while you get out the ingredients for a cake.
4. Play storebought games emphasizing words or vocabulary.
5. Spend twenty minutes to half hour every night listening to child read aloud.
6. Offer reward for x number of books read per month.
7. Make writing letters to an out-of-town relative or friend a weekly event.
8. Use flash cards to expose him to words.
9. Encourage reading from a variety of sources: Comic strips, Reader's Digest, colorful magazines like National Geographic or Science or Ranger Rick, Ebony, newspaper, encyclopedias, almanacs, joke book, plays, etc.
10. Help child to decipher meaning of story, words, or terminology.
11. During intervals of storytelling time, request child to draw pictures descriptive of certain scenes from stories.
12. Play games of identifying initial sounds and ending sounds.
13. Write what you hear. Enunciating every letter in a word, have Mary to write what she hears, one letter at a time. As Mary advances, try two words at a time.

14. Design an extra, humanitarian reason for him to read. For example, Kenny can read to a nursing home patient, a grandmother with poor eyesight, a younger sibling, or an ill neighbor. You will help him choose the book a month in advance, encouraging him to "practice" for the big day. This will serve a two-way purpose in achievement and pleasure for Kenny and his beneficiary.

STUDYING

Studying is fundamental to the learning-achievement process. Parents have a responsibility to see that their children study. Let's lay out a beginner's plan.

I. Provide a quiet spot for Johnny to study. Away from television, away from radio, away from talking of any kind, away from any distractions.

II. Decide on the time when studying should take place. Will it be around 4 o'clock after a short rest and a little snack? Or will it be after dinner and bath? Form the habit of having regular time every day for Johnny to study.

III. Is it possible to provide dictionaries and (maybe) encyclopedias for Johnny to use? If he needs special books, will you work out a way for him to get to the library?

IV. What tools does he need? Paper, pencils, compasses, protractors, notebooks? Do you leave it to his judgment to buy what he needs or do you join with him so that he has no excuses?

V. What about resource persons? If Johnny has difficulty understanding his lessons is there someone he can call (an adult)? Will you be able to help him? Find out if the teacher is accessible after school hours?

VI. If tests or quizzes are coming up during the week, will you see to it that he makes extra preparation?

VII. Check the lighting over his left shoulder.

VIII. Eliminate food from the study area. He should not try to eat french fries and drink coke while writing that paper on Greek mythology.

IX. Encourage Johnny to sit in a straight chair; it's better than lying on a bed trying to read or solve math problems.

X. Study time should be separate from homework time. Study time should come after completion of homework. It should be a time to review, to analyze and consider, to memorize, to practice, to read.

XI. Reinforce study habits by asking Johnny questions related to present topics in social studies or science. Encourage him to discuss fascinating topics over dinner.

XIII. Check to see that he brings his textbooks home. Parents do have a responsibility for seeing to it that their children study.

TAKING TIME

Take time with your children, parents. They grow up all too fast. Diapers don't last forever, and teething pains come to an end. Your unruly two year old quickly turns into a well-behaved first grader. So enjoy each stage of their growth. The memory will be precious later.

That spic and span floor you polish every day to impress your neighbor, that overtime pay you insist on making, those frequent club meetings you must attend, and the social functions you can't miss amount to only a grain of sand when compared with the rewards of parenting.

Ten minutes a day to sit with your child going over the day's events, letting him tell you what was important, hearing his joys and frustrations, can be priceless. Playing bingo with the family, praying together in the early morning dawn, shopping with your teenaged daughter, watching your son play basketball, and baking a chocolate cake with your small fry are activities to cherish.

We take this time by first affirming that it is important to take time every day to be with each child in loving, companionable communication. We schedule that time into our busy day's activities. It is said that the reason many parents have lukewarm affections for their children is due to a failure to bond during infancy. They fail to spend enough time holding, feeding, caring for, loving the infant. I believe that a similar bonding must continue with our offspring until they reach adulthood. Bonding, to me, means taking time to say, "I love you," to hug, to smile, to pat a hand, to dry a tear, to say a kind word, to be in harmonious company with our children whatever their ages.

TASK SEQUENCE

Seven year old Kim blinked rapidly, trying to follow the long list of tasks her mother was itemizing. "Wash and dry the cups, take out the trash, call the cleaners and see if your jacket is ready, get grandmother's ice cream churn from the basement, and don't forget to take the laundry out of the dryer," Kim's mother was saying.

Later, Kim's mother was outraged that her daughter hadn't done half the jobs on the list. Are you surprised?

Kim had felt overwhelmed. She was tired before she even started. Her memory was overlogged.

The next day Kim's mother did things differently, "Kim," she said, "wash and dry the cups. Afterward, take out the trash. Any questions?" When those tasks were completed, Kim's mother clearly explained two more tasks. When these were completed, she gave Kim one more task, making sure Kim understood what was involved.

When giving tasks to children, don't overwhelm them with too much at one time. If you will be out and the child is able to read, leave the list in a conspicuous place, advising the child to strike off completed tasks as soon as they're finished. However, even when making a list, verbally discuss the list, giving the child a chance to ask questions or make comments.

Task sequence gives order to the child's mind and leads to clear thinking. Learning task sequence at home under loving conditions prepares the child to confidently solve math problems—as in division—that involve several steps before reaching an answer.

BE QUICK

Does Mary need to be that quick, Mom? She's trying to solve a four step division problem, and she needs time to think.

Dad, you're rushing Johnny to finish his five science questions. To do a good job, Johnny needed to review his notes from the lab experiment and he needed to study information from a couple of graphs. Johnny needs time to think.

Are we as a society guilty of placing too much emphasis on being quick? Yes, we are.

Undoubtedly, there will come a time in Mary's and Johnny's lives where quickness will be necessary. But the younger learner has a greater need to cultivate his thinking processes, unhampered by a demand to be quick. People of any age think clearly when there is no pressure exerted on them; young learners should not have pressure.

When pressure (like, "be quick") is placed, they tend to freeze up, unable to function at all, or they make hasty judgments bearing little resemblance to the knowledge they possess. Some decide, "What's the use? I can't finish in one minute."

Instead of pressuring to "be quick," let us encourage our children to "take time and think clearly."

Later, when they learn to think clearly in processing information, quickness will come naturally in situations where it's needed.

OVERCOMING VAGUENESS

Mary Jane always feels hurt when her mother shouts, "You never do anything the right way. What's wrong with you?"

Vagueness might be what's wrong—but not with Mary Jane; with her mother.

When Mary Jane's mother says, "Clean your bedroom," she might get better results if, instead, she enters Mary Jane's bedroom and points out the specific jobs that need doing. For instance: Pick up all paper from the floor, put in waste basket. Pick up all toys and put them in the toy box. Make up your bed. Hang up your clothes. Maybe provide a checklist as each chore is completed.

This type of specific detail extends to other communication between Mary Jane and Mom. Remember the day Mary Jane asked Mom to help her with division problems for homework? Mom was most agreeable; she sat down and completed all the problems, occasionally saying, "See! It's easy. Just put your numbers up here above the radicand." Boy! Was she angry with the low test scores Mary Jane continued to get in division.

Mom's help was vague. It would have been much clearer to Mary Jane had her mother gone through a very simple problem step by step, explaining when she multiplied and subtracted, and allowing Mary Jane to perform each step under her direction. After that, the child could have completed a few more sample problems under Mom's guidance.

Vagueness handicaps the child. It blocks communication between you and her. Often, she's left to interpret information for which she has no prior knowledge or background. It prevents the child from understanding and performing skills that are really quite easy.

Specific detail, patience to explain, willingness to show or illustrate, guidance and direction are a few combats to vagueness.

Let us examine our interaction with our children. We may discover a very capable child, once we, as parents, overcome our vagueness.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Is that squatter in front of the television set your suffering jack who's been making F's in math and D's in reading? Every night at supper Jack gives you a horribly detailed account of how his teacher, Miss Pigsty, hates him. Poor Jack!

Take a look at Evangeline. That darling girl is a video addict. And eager Beaver Mark can't wait till he can get out in the streets to roam with his buddies. Evangeline and Mark never do their homework, and they're lost in any class activity. Needless to say, they're going to repeat fourth grade.

At the root of their problem is time management. In school or out, children need illustrations and guidance on how to parcel five minutes for writing down spelling words and ten minutes for computing arithmetic and ten minutes for locating states on maps. Time is a commodity they must respect, a must for storing knowledge.

For the child who is already a time-waster, parents should begin by monitoring his activities and presenting him with a written account: Snacked—3-30-4:00, watched t.v. 4:00-6:00, ate dinner 6:00-6:30, talked on telephone 6:30-7:15, watched t.v. 7:15-10:00, opened textbook 10:00-10:12, snacked 10:13-10:45, took bath 10:46-11:00. Analyze time wasting activities and slice off time appropriately to be parceled toward homework or studying.

Scheduling time on paper and posting schedule in a highly visible spot makes the time waster aware that he is responsible for keeping activities in specific time frame, that there is enough time to do necessary academics and time to play.

For younger children just starting school, parents will want to start them off in the habit of parceling time for homework and related studies in addition to parceling time for home chores and time for play.

FOCUS ATTENTION: ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS

Does your child have a short attention span? Are you looking for ways to lengthen her attention span?

If you notice your preschooler or school age child being easily distracted from the task at hand, an immediate solution is to assess the types of things or activities that distract her. Remove these distractions from environment where task is taking place.

Rolling a ball back and forth between child and yourself for increasing time lengths will train the child to focus his attention.

Make a child pay attention by establishing eye contact with her and using the words, "Look at me." Proceed to give the child your individual attention.

Set up study places away from distractions. Radios, stereos, t.v., others in conversation, and sibling squabbles are just a few distractions.

Set up a definite time period for study—reading, math, map search—and follow it with a period of relaxation. For the child with a short attention span, study time should be broken up into 15 or 20 minute periods, followed by a 10 minute relaxation period. This should continue until your child learns to concentrate for longer time periods.

To get a child motivated use incentives to reward the amount of time she's studied. Eventually child will focus attention without thinking of reward.

Much learning is lost because a child does not know how to focus attention and eliminate distractions. Hopefully, your consistent attention to this problem will carry over to your child's school program and gain learning for him in a very positive way.

ORGANIZATION

Imagine this classroom scene: Teacher Jones is at the blackboard explaining how to alphabetize words. All eyes are glued to the board.

Suddenly, the door bursts open and Ginger scrambles in. Her books are lopsided in her arms, halfway falling, and her coat is caught loosely under one arm, dragging the floor. In getting to her last row seat, she throws out a few "Hi, Marys" and stumbles over a few feet. Finally, sitting down, she leans over someone's shoulder to find out where they are in the textbook and what's Mrs. Jones doing at the blackboard. Everybody shushes her when she loudly gets up to sharpen several pencils. And wouldn't you know it—Ginger didn't bring her language notebook to class and forgot the textbook in her locker.

Mrs. Jones was disgruntled. She asked Ginger to come back after school.

Perhaps Ginger's mom or dad could help Ginger at home. Ginger lacks organization.

The immediate organization solution is to go to school with Ginger and show her how to organize her locker in terms of text books needed by class periods. Textbooks should be turned to show title. Notebooks with attached pouches to contain pencils, pens, erasers, etc. should be within easy reach. Leave coats and anything unnecessary to classes in the locker. Carry assignment notebooks within general notebook in order to write down assignments.

Mom and dad must stress a better attitude toward time management and responsibility for getting to class before bell rings. Ginger might need illustrations of how not to get sidetracked along the way to class. If she's already running late, she must learn to control the impulse to stop off for a drink of water or to nibble a candy bar. Very importantly, she should be aware of what school laws say about tardiness.

At the home level, parents can help Ginger by giving her the opportunity to organize family events or chores. Planning a meal or planning how to spend a Saturday would be starters. Give special attention to seeing that tools and supplies are on hand for coming activity.

Once Ginger becomes conscious of organizing herself, many of her problems will disappear. Even her poor grades should disappear.

Unorganized children, like Ginger, lag behind others because they miss a whole lot of instructions and often never finish classwork. They lose self esteem and the good opinion of others in the process, too, for their distractions curb other students' attentiveness causing them to miss something.

In simple, it wastes individual student time and it wastes teacher time.

EXPECT SOMETHING GOOD

Call Betty "smart" and she will think of herself as smart; preach Alex a sermon on his "dummy" brain, and he will know he's a dummy. Generally, children live up to your expectations of them. In many ways that's a frightening realization, for much harm can be done (and is). But in another sense, it offers powerful leverage to the parent who wishes to shape a terrific youngster.

Shaping a terrific youngster comes through knowing your child's strengths and weaknesses, for you are then in a position to gauge your expectations in proportion to realism. For example, if Alex is a horrible speller, you don't scream at him for not being selected for the CITY SPELLING BEEE. On the other hand, you can begin calling words out to him three days prior to a class spelling test, expecting him to make an "A."

If Pamela has always been top notch in figuring out word problems and quick with numerical calculations, you have a right to expect excellent grades in her mathematics report. Falling below the mark is unacceptable, and you let her know that. To reach and maintain her best performance, Pamela may need constant reminders that your expectations are based on your awareness of her true potential.

"Be true to yourself" is an old adage few children adhere to. It is much easier to be true to the peer group; in so doing, they tend to expect less of themselves in relation to their true abilities. They need their parents to say, "I expect something good from you. So much about you is terrific."

Certain qualities have to be instilled in children before they or you can realistically expect something good. Habit of putting forth best effort, persistence, self confidence, winning attitude, goal setting habit, and optimism are some of these qualities. These enable the child to pursue maximum achievement.

MAKING ARITHMETIC TOUCHABLE

If you've got shoes, you've got a way to teach your first, second, or third grader basic number combinations. It doesn't have to be shoes, for it can be sticks, straws, boiled eggs, apples, pencils, leaves, or anything moveable and touchable.

On a bedroom floor or any open space lay out six shoes. Line the shoes up in a straight line. Count each shoe by touching it. Next, your son's turn. He must count each shoe by touching it.

Step two: Rearrange the six shoes in two groups of threes. For a few seconds, encourage your son to look, emphasizing that three shoes on one side added to three shoes on the other side are still six shoes. Let him count for himself.

Step three: Ask your son to separate six shoes into three groups of twos. How did he do? Encourage him to add the number of shoes in group one to the number of shoes in group two to the number of shoes in group three.

You restate the addition, $2+2+2=6$ by writing it down in big numerals on a sheet of paper. Use red crayon.

Step four: Get your son to tell you (in words) two different number combinations that add up to six. Next, get him to rearrange the six shoes to show those combinations. Finally, encourage him to write those combinations on paper.

This same method effectively teaches any set of number combinations.

Won't you try it with your second grader?

VISUALIZING AND OBSERVING

When a child is trained to isolate facts, numbers, names, any piece of knowledge for memorizing, he's also being trained to visualize. Memory is largely an experience that comes from visual images—both what he sees through his eyes and through his mind. If the child is actually looking at something that needs to be memorized, his mind doesn't wander as much. Later, the mind is able to go back and reproduce what it has seen.

For fun and games with infants and children thru twelve years of age or older, do the following: Show the child a ball—let the ball roll. Hand it to him, allowing him to hold it for a few seconds.

Now, with the ball in your hand, tell the child to close his eyes. Tell him to put a picture of the ball in his mind. Ask him to imagine it rolling and to imagine the way it feels.

A stuffed animal, a salt box, a fruit, anything can be used.

After he understands what visualizing is all about, teach him to observe that same object.

Observing means what are the details: What color is the salt box? How heavy is the box? Size of ball? Were there any designs on the salt box? Was the ball old or new? Was there a knick any where? Train him to look carefully and study detail.

When objects are isolated for memory, they are visualized and observed.

IS YOUR TEEN DEPRESSED

Has your teenager suddenly lost interest in things that were once important? Does he mope about, talking about sad or unhappy events? Is his outlook defeated?

You may have noticed that he broods a lot. He's fearful, critical, or irritable. Janie, your bright, bubbly daughter has turned teary-eyed.

Teenagers do suffer depression. A broken romance, bickering with Mom or Dad, inferiority complexes, bad grades—any number of reasons account for teenager's depression.

You're concerned for your child's well being when you suspect depression. You know his health is suffering (he's eating too much or too little, he's not sleeping well); and you know his school work is suffering.

What can you do? If he's reached severe depression, get professional help. Spiritual guidance or family counseling services may be necessary if it's not severe but still beyond your handling.

Light depression, in its early stages, something you can handle, might best be treated by offering your moral support—a shoulder to cry on, listening, sympathy, understanding, words of encouragement.

Prod your teenager into fulfilling his responsibilities and doing his job. Encourage him to keep busy, thus avoiding time to feel sorry for himself.

UNREADINESS IN CHILDREN

Bob and Jane Foley are typical of most parents: They want the best for their children. They made the mistake, however, of thinking that what was best for their neighbor's six year old daughter was the same best for their six year old daughter.

Their neighbor's daughter was full of personality; she had good motor development (hopping, skipping, catching a ball, tieing her shoelaces, cutting with scissors, using a pencil, etc.). She had a good sense of direction and good eye-hand coordination. Her visual memory was fantastic – if you placed a salt box, a flower, a dollar bill, and a key chain on a table, then removed one, she knew immediately which one. When told a story, she could repeat it; and she could verbalize what she saw in a picture.

On the other hand, the Foley's daughter was shy and withdrawn. Sleeping and eating problems developed about the third week of first grade. When her mother picked her up from school, the child was crying. Although she loved being around other children and liked her teacher, she couldn't keep up with the class. She had not developed in critical areas for first grade work.

Does it surprise you to learn that the kindergarten teacher recommended to Bob and Jane that their daughter would benefit by staying in kindergarten another year? The teacher wanted her to mature some more before going on to a more demanding curriculum.

After analyzing their daughter's stress signals with school personnel, Bob and Jane realized that what was best for their neighbor's daughter was not best for their daughter.

Each child is an individual. Each matures at a different rate; many factors affect that maturity. Age does not confer readiness.

If you notice stress signals in your child—sleeping or eating problems; change from a normal good nature; undue anger; excessive fights with classmates; friends, siblings; avoiding social contacts; extreme crying or moodiness—beware that the child may be saying, "I'm not ready. I can't cope yet. Give me another year."

CLASHING WITH THE UNDERACHIEVER

A visiting science committee at Rutley High sat mesmerized listening to 14-year old Amy explain genetic variations to her biology class. Competent and self assured, Amy used models and graphic illustrations to mathematically prove her points. Even her classmates clapped when she finished.

After class, a member of the visiting science committee commented to the biology teacher that Amy was brilliant. "Twenty years from now I expect her to head a research team, making great discoveries," said the committee member.

The biology teacher frowned. "I wish it were possible," he said, "but I doubt if Amy will finish college—certainly not in science. She might not even get accepted into a good college."

"Why?" the stunned committee member asked.

"Amy is an underachiever," said the biology teacher. She can't make higher than a "C" on a test to save her life. In fact, quite often she makes 'D's'."

Spencer Martin is similar to Amy. In his Algebra class the teacher relies on him to quickly understand concepts and solve problems on the board. He's gifted with an intuitive mathematical sense, but on tests he remains in the "B or below" category. According to his parents, Spencer is an underachiever.

Underachievers clash with the norms in society; they clash with their parents' high hopes, and quite often they clash with their own hopes and dreams. They are labeled "underachievers," because their low grades reflect the work of less capable students. However, IQ and aptitude scores are higher than these grades indicate.

Amy and Spencer fall into a category of underachievers who are generally highly creative and intellectual. They do poorly on tests because test masters expect you to choose one best answer, and these children have insight into several correct answers.

Creativity is a potential that may not always be evident to the observer. It can include divergent thinking patterns, great perception, fluency, flexibility, intuition, strong interest in intellectual matters. In most instances these children are a joy. Other people quickly recognize and appreciate their imagination and independence.

Parents can help this group of underachievers by boosting their morale and encouraging their self confidence. See to it that they prepare for quizzes, tests, and exams. Go through questions with them, showing them how to arrive at conventional answers.

For this child you have to assure him that his creativity and greater intellect is wonderful, but tests will not measure his creativity with compliment. Here, he must learn to be conventional if he is to be successful.

Incidentally, the underachieving creative intellectual shows up before adolescence. Try to spot her/him before she/he loses the sparkle and decides she's a failure.

"APATHETIC" UNDERACHIEVER

Kenny Peterson had been knocked down so many times he didn't know how to get up. In fact, he had lost the desire to get up. No, he wasn't knocked down in a boxing match or a wrestling match, and he wasn't in a gang fight. Grading systems and other forms of evaluation had knocked Kenny down.

According to IQ tests Kenny is above average; his reading and math skills were complimented with good grades until he reached ninth grade. About that time, things started going downhill. Because of moving to a new home and family problems. Kenny forgot to turn in his English homework twice; that earned him a "D" the first nine weeks. The second nine weeks, he received "D's" in English, math and science. His tenth grade year added one more notch in the failure belt – he got a "D" in history as well as in English, math, and science.

By this time, Kenny was ready to throw in the towel. "What's the use of trying?" he asked his counselor. "I get dumber every year. No matter how hard I try, 'D's' tag me."

Luckily, Kenny's dad kept faith in him. The problem Kenny's Dad solved was: How do I encourage him and show him that he can achieve?

Dad was aware that Kenny's self confidence had erroded. Kenny was overwhelmed by circumstances he didn't know how to control.

"Remember the 'A's' you used to get in math?" Dad reminded Kenny. "I always thought you were a natural with numbers."

"Yeh! I remember," Kenny replied.

Over and over again, Kenny's dad reminded him of former successes, and over and over again Kenny remembered. Together, Dad and Kenny looked at the reasons for

low grades. In many cases, low grades resulted because Kenny hadn't turned in homework or completed a project. His basic skills were still above average.

Once Kenny gained some confidence and renewed his self esteem, he began to realize the he was not doomed to failure, that he had some control over his grades.

Apathetic Kenny changed into energetic, optimistic Kenny. Look at your underachiever. Does he resemble Kenny?

"UNAWARE OPTIMIST" UNDERACHIEVER

"Sara only told me about the 95's and 100's she received in math," one mother said, "but she completely ignored the 47 and 64." Indeed! Sara had balled up the test papers with grades below B's. She chose to see what she wanted, deceiving herself and her mother in the process. Perhaps she expected a magic wand to wave away her bad grades.

During elementary school Sara got used to A's on her report cards. Her success seemed guaranteed for life. Unfortunately, Sara was so much attuned to interpreting signs of success, she could not/would not recognize the danger signs of failure.

The "Unaware Optimist" is a category of underachievers who aren't aware when they're in trouble. Try to catch them before they suffer serious set-back. Usually, their problem stems from not studying thoroughly, not preparing sufficiently for quizzes or tests, not managing their time and efforts efficiently, and overestimating their knowledge.

Parents of the "Unaware Optimist" have experienced much let down, thinking Sara was going to make the honor roll, only to find she's barely hanging on. To steer Sara in the right direction, insist on her recording every grade she makes in every subject. Get her in the habit of reviewing and analyzing previous quizzes or tests from each subject; this shows her the teacher's style of questioning and where and how emphasis is placed. Monitor Sara's performance on a daily basis, forcing her to admit that work toward grades takes place every day she's in class.

Some experts ask, "How much time does Sara spend outside of the classroom? Does she listen in class, afterward feeling she has understood, and decides she doesn't need to study or do anything extra?"

When parents of the "Unaware Optimist" answer those questions, they sometimes tap the spring of Sara's deception.

WHERE DOES MARCIA FIT IN?

Teacher says, "Good morning, Marcia, dear. My, but don't you look pretty. Go on over to the Chip Wips and take out your book."

At home, pretty little Marcia tells her adoring family what nice fun she has in her Chip Wips group. She brags that they don't do much, and they don't nearly have as much work as the Frontier Frugs. Mom smiles; Dad pats Marcia on the back. They're all satisfied.

Perhaps they should be concerned—concerned enough to ask the school, "What does it mean to be a Chip Wips? Is this part of your ability grouping? Show me how you decided Marcia belonged in the Chip Wips. Will she stay there all year, or will she move up to another group?"

Find out all you can about the school's educational program; become knowledgeable about any special aspects of the program. If tests are administered to make these determinations on where your child fits in, you should know about them. If predictions are made on her ability to cope with certain learning levels, based on racial or economic backgrounds, irrespective of potential or test results, you should be aware.

Tracking or ability grouping come very early in a child's education. Unfortunately, Marcia's parents never realized this. Marcia was in the Chip Wips, a low ability group, because her reading scores on the Metropolitan Reading Test were low. Bright and intelligent as Marcia is, her potential may go undeveloped in view of her Chip Wips designation. Chances are, she will never move from Chip Wips or low ability grouping.

Undoubtedly, there is a need for low ability grouping and other special aspects of school programs that deal with slow learners. When it is properly justified, it is a definite advantage to the child who needs it. However, far too many black children are placed here because the

system sees them as culturally disadvantaged, whether they are or not. In some areas, students are blocked into low ability grouping, being taught very little by impatient, unimaginative teachers who only know how to grade papers.

It is up to parents to find out from day one whether Marcia has been tracked; they ought to ask how and why. If it is their judgment that Marcia has more ability than testing revealed, they should work with her more intensely at home, or get tutorial help for her outside of school, or ask the school for tutorial assistance within their own program.

Definitely communicate with Marcia, keeping abreast of work, progress, time spent meaningfully or idilly, extreme paper work, what she's learned, and the general state of learning situations, for minimum doses of instruction will only produce minimum learning and minimum knowledge.

In the final analysis of years spent in school it really won't matter whether the teacher thought Marcia was pretty. It won't even matter whether she had fun or not. What will matter is did she learn and how much. Throughout her school life, she is going to be tested. Those tests may determine her future.

HOW TO RELIEVE DRUDGERY WHEN LEARNING HARD CONCEPTS

What's hard for some, may be easy for others. A child's attitude can turn something hard into something easier. Parents can help.

Encourage child to believe that if a concept has been introduced in his studies, he already possesses the necessary skills and knowledge to understand it. His problem lies in how to approach it. Erase his fears and doubts by admitting that sometimes hard concepts take longer to understand than others.

Along the way to learning a hard concept, explore these means of relieving drudgery:

(1) Turn the concept into a game.

(2) Construct a roadmap, using information that ultimately leads to the concept.

(3) Sing a jingle to remember a hard concept.

(4) Bring the concept to a personal level. For example: Mark wants to understand how to compute a salesman's commission. Tell him to imagine that he's a salesman trying to sell baseball bats. If he sells ten, he gets $5 extra added on to his regular salary. Talk about other jobs where people sell. Afterward, put these stories onto paper for actual computation.

(5) Manipulate objects that will help explain what's happening in the concept.

(6) Learn and understand a small portion at one time.

(7) Discuss concept with someone who is familiar with it.

(8) Write the concept down and break it up into small, manageable ideas.

(9) See how concept applies to ideas child knows already.

(10) Think about the meaning of the concept using other words, perhaps simpler words.

(11) Look up words or terminology not understood clearly.

(12) Allow a peer, who understands it, to explain it.

(13) Help the child to understand why he needs to know the concept. Can knowing it affect him directly?

(14) If simpler number ideas are involved, review them before tackling the main concept. Often children have forgotten basic ideas and are not in a position to approach anything more difficult.

REINFORCING GOOD BEHAVIOR

Undisciplined children do poorly in school. Their disruptive behaviors make it difficult for them—and sometimes, others—to learn. But teaching discipline and good behavior are parents' responsibility.

Naturally, the younger a child learns good discipline and good behavior, the easier it is to correct negative behavior should it occur later.

Teach a child to discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable behavior through dialogue communication of what-ifs, picture examples, or talk following his actions or someone else's actions.

Give your verbal approval to your child's good behavior. Be sincere in your praises and he will want to repeat that behavior.

Don't give too much attention to poor behavior or a lack of discipline. Sometimes children figure this is the only way to get your attention. Occasionally, you will want to point out to him that when you or his teachers fuss at him, he's getting negative attention, and negative attention is worthless. It hurts him.

Look for your childs' good actions. Catch him in the act of controlling his temper, doing homework without needing to be reminded, talking less while working, straightening up his room.

Reward his good behaviors verbally or with small tokens.

Show a pleasant, relaxed attitude when your normally undisciplined child disciplines himself, letting him feel social acceptance comes with good discipline.

CREATE A MATHEMATICAL ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR CHILD, III

Bobby is in second grade, and he can't tell time. He's very frustrated.

Bobby's mother has begun helping him by getting him in the habit of looking at clocks. She began by bringing attention to certain times of day, concentrating on an exact hour for several weeks or months. For example: She says, "Look at the clock. It's six o'clock already. I wanted to have dinner on the table by that time. Will you watch the clock tomorrow and let me know when it's six o'clock?" She will move on to concentrate on other exact hour times, repeatedly showing him how to recognize hand positions. Next, she moves to the half hour recognition, and later to the quarter hour.

For the school aged child, like Bobby, noting a lapse of time can present difficulty. Work on specific time lapses. "We need to boil these eggs 15 minutes. The long hand is pointing to one; call me when the long hand is pointing to four. That will be fifteen minutes from now." Be consistent. Be daily.

A precondition for telling time is counting by fives. Well before the child needs to be able to tell time in school, see to it that he learns to count by fives.

To lay a foundation for number skills in a younger child or to strengthen skills in a school aged child requires hands-on and thoughts-on approaches. However, additional special efforts can be made. The child needs practice in rote addition, subtraction, and multiplication. While you are cooking or doing the laundry is a good time to call the child to your side for drill.

Many stores bought games strengthen the child's weaker math skills. Home-made games are not to be overlooked. Toy clocks are very effective in teaching time, and so are games created by mom or dad.

Able minded math students will definitely result from homes that have created an environment to nurture varied math skills.

100

PARENT-CHILD GAMES, I

GRAY SQUIRREL

Triplicate number cards from 0 to 20. Two players. One stack of cards in center of board, face down. Toss coin to see who moves first. First player pulls card from center stack, turning it over. He takes first card from his own deck, laying it beside the other. Second player lays his first card beside other two cards. If three cards match, first player is "Gray Squirrel." Prize is taken from treasury. Game continues with second player going first. Repeat movements until Gray Squirrel has been won at least three times.

RHYME CHALLENGE

Adult calls out short word. Child has to call out word that rhymes with it. Continue for five words. Reverse by allowing child to call word and adult attempts to rhyme.

SHOW ME A "T"

Given a set of cards with these sounds: an, ar, oo, ea, ag, ip, in, op, ub, ab, ap, and oe parent holds up each card, pronouncing.

Child places "t" sound in front of given sound and correctly pronounces word.

Small token is awarded at end of game.

PICK UP STICKS

Caller says, "Two sticks."

Two players race to table laden with sticks to pick up number of sticks called. They return to starting point with sticks. First returnee wins round. Each successive round calls a different number.

Winner of each round receives 1 point.

Winner of 10 points wins game.

TOOTHPICK ALPHABET

Given three toothpicks and an hour glass, how many letters can you form in the shortest time.

ACT IT OUT

Print the names of child's favorite songs, stories, nursery rhymes, plays, or poems on cardboard squares.

Eyes closed, child pulls card.

Coming before group of other players, child acts out title printed on card. Others guess. Whoever correctly guesses gets next turn.

ANIMAL HIDING

Given a spread of pictures, including a bobcat, bird, fish, bear, monkey, squirrel, bat, ground hog, earth worms, and kangaroo, caller continually calls out words: over, under, inside.

As caller calls, child turns over picture of animal that would likely hide in those positions.

GIVE A REASON

Given a stack of cards with the following descriptions, child has to supply reasonable explanations to account for situation.

1. Man wearing an overcoat, scarf, and gloves.
2. Cat licking paws, beside an overturned gallon of milk.
3. Sheep on hillside.
4. Hoe, rake, shovel, and gloves beside wheelbarrow.
5. Bucket of water at feet of man who is emptyhanded.
6. Child is wearing a bathing suit and holding a beach ball.
7. Boy is up tree, sitting on limb.
8. Woman is holding armload of packages.
9. Christmas tree with no presents beneath it.
10. Dinner table laden with roast turkey, pies, cakes, and vegetables; boy is laughing and rubbing his stomach.

PARENT-CHILD GAMES, II

RUB-A-DUB

Given: Squares of wool, nylon, cotton, and a blown-up balloon.

Game: Rub square on balloon and see what happens when you lay balloon against wall.

If balloon sticks, peanut is awarded when child correctly identifies type of fabric.

SOUND-A-LIKES

Given: Box marked "a," box marked "i," and a stack of pictures.

Game: Child must separate pictures into either box according to the initial sound of the picture.

CLOSED BOX

On table, place a box containing 4 different things: pencil, can of milk, ribbon, apple. You can vary the number of pencils or apples in box. Child is asked to quickly peak inside box, afterward being able to tell everything in box and how many. Change objects. Vary number of objects. Repeat several times.

BIG BOX, LITTLE BOX

Arrange 3 or 4 boxes of varying sizes on table. In smallest box, place five buttons; in medium box, place three pennies; and in large box, place one apple. Child is asked to look quickly and determine which box has most or least. Then, ask how many things were in each box.

TRAIN TRACK

Arrange ten can goods of different sizes along a path. Smallest can at starting point, largest can at destination point. All other cans have mixed placement. Child has to move smallest can along path until destination point is reached, then move next smallest can before it, and continue this process until all cans have been arranged from largest to smallest.

ANIMAL ASSOCIATIONS

Design a gameboard with at least fifteen segments, each bearing a description similar to the following: furry, scales, slither, cluck-cluck, big, fly, beak, bark, cave, feathers, water-dweller, wagging, tadpoles, tiny, webbed feet, and circus.

Spin the dial to one of the characteristics. Choose animal card from your card deck that best fits characteristics. Cards are: Chicken, bear, snake, frog, canary, dog, trout, etc.

BREAKFAST POT LUCK

Word problems on individual slips of paper stored in cannister on breakfast table. Child pulls out slip of paper, answers problem, and returns paper to cannister. If he answers correctly he chooses reward from pot on table. Pot contains pennies, card, balloons, or small trinkets.

BLINDFOLD REACH

Given a bag of common things around household, reach into bag and pull out an object. You may touch, taste, or examine object in any way you choose to correctly identify it and tell something about it.

PARENT-CHILD GAMES, III

LEAD ME

Knowing his starting point, eyes closed, or blind folded, child is asked to lead the way to another room of the house. Once there he has to locate specific object.

BLIND TOUCHER

Blind fold child and have him follow your voice throughout house. At any point and many points along the way, stop and ask, "Where are you?" He can touch walls, floors, or whatever in order to make a decision. He may ask what function takes place in a particular room.

PLACEY-PLACE

Fill a tray (egg carton or ice cube tray) in a particular order with two different kinds of objects.

A. Have child to look at this for a few seconds. Remove objects.
B. Ask him to replace and arrange objects in same manner as they were.

Keep increasing number of objects in various arrangements for child to replace and duplicate arrangement.

WORD-BIRD

Cut-out birds attached to balloons with simple words written on back are chosen by child. He has to give a synonym for that word or a closely associated word. Each time he gives good response, bird is allowed to fly.

NAME THAT TUNE

Use his favorite music. Using records, play just a few bars, and ask him to name that tune. Continue to play the same music until he identifies or says he doesn't know.

Allow length of time it takes child to identify music to govern the prize given.

*Stars, nuts, raisins, stick-ons, etc. make nice, inexpensive prizes.

NUMBER BUILD-UP

Make: 14 10-inch cubes that will each bear a number from 1 to 14.

Game: You place cube with "1" on each side down on floor. Direct child to top your cube with the next number in sequence. You top his with "3." Continue until correct number sequence has been built. Person placing last cube gets to build any structure he desires.

RETELL

Turn on record player with short story. After every 2 minutes of story, stop and direct child to retell the portion just heard. After end is reached, star is awarded.

ACTIVITIES FOR THE YOUNG

(1) Concept of Space. Finger dexterity and eye-hand coordination. ¼ Inches confetti pasting on drawn pictures. Make confetti out of brightly colored papers. Let child smear paste all over picture (fish, clock, hen, etc.), then pick up confetti piece by piece to fill in drawing.

• Extra benefit: patience.

(2) Listening To Varied Kinds Of Music.

Begin: 5 minutes. No talking or other interruptions. Tell him name of piece, kind, composer. Repeat same section for 1 week, giving all information. Next week, put same music on and ask him for information.

Change music every three to four weeks, but always go back to previous.

(3) Listening to Records: Poems & Stories.

(4) Building houses from boxes.

(5) Looking at Various Pictures. Look at one picture of a special animal, special house, face, object, etc. for one week for five minutes at a time. After a week, see if he can name it when you show it to him.

(6) Look at more complicated picture.

a. In a magazine.
b. In a story book.
c. Discuss the picture in detail: Coloring, natural scenery, people, animals, windows, bird flying in sky.

(7) Acting Out Story. Three Little Pigs. After reading story to child several times, allow him to tell you the story in his own words. Then, pretend you're the wolf and he, the pig. Each character speaks as the character would and acts as the character should act.

(8) Science Experiments For Young. Go to your library and select books on simple experiments you can do with your child. Or read a science how and why book to him once in a while.

(9) Share the evening news with a three year-old or older child. Discuss it with him later.

(10) FREE PLAY. Give a child plenty of time to be alone with his own thoughts and responses to do as he pleases. Free play is necessary for spontaneous learning and pivotal for creativity.

SHOWING FAVORITISM

"Janie, you're so cute, I'm giving you this toy."

"...but, Mommy, yesterday you said you would give me that toy when I finished my social studies project."

"Oh...I know, Tracey, but Janie is so cute. You wait for another time."

Sound familiar? Scenes between parent and child, the parent showing favoritism, are too familiar in family living. Unfortunately, children are hurt by favoritism.

They lose their self esteem and feeling of self worth; their egoes are damaged, sometimes beyond repair. Often these feelings show up in rebellious, contemptuous behaviors. Frequently, they retaliate by saying or doing things that are socially unacceptable. Their education suffers as a result of "the what's the use" attitude, a lack of interest, daydreaming, and a stream of other related problems.

We don't want our children to feel like rotten apples because of our rotten favoritism. We want each child to feel full of importance and self worth.

So, stop yourself the next time you feel like showing favoritism. Examine your motives. What are you unconsciously saying to the child? Do you want him to distrust you, to harbor resentment for you that may last a lifetime? Do you want him to view the world as an unfair, unjust place? Most importantly, did you really intend to kick the child in his gut—defenseless as he is? Favoritism can be a verbal form of abuse; it kicks the child in the gut.

RIGHT CHANNELS

Now and then a child comes across a classmate or schoolmate who uses abusive language—language that imparts low self esteem and tears down morale.

Don't tolerate it! Whether it is said in a joking manner or in a nasty manner, it is inappropriate and can do lasting damage to the child's self perception.

Do you teach the child to punch the abusive mouth with his fist or to ignore it? Neither is desirable, because he may get suspension from school for one or a repeat performance from the other. Going through the right channels to have the abuser disciplined is more effective. The right channels mean those people or agencies who have authority to exercise punishment. In school, teach the child to tell his teacher of a problem before he takes any swings himself.

If the problem continues, and the child shows fear and frustration, you may have to make formal complains to higher authorities. When you make a formal complaint, back up your complaint with some tangible evidence: dates of abusive ianguage, witnesses, and any other proof.

Further channels: When the classroom teacher runs out of measures to effectively curtail the abuser, go to the principal; request him to take immediate action. If his actions fail, you should go to higher authorities, Supervisor of Instruction, or School Superintendent. If you still get no satisfaction, take your complaint to the school board.

We can't start too early talking to our children about "The right channels." By learning to use "Right Channels" they discover a vehicle for expressing anger, protesting unfair judgment, and combatting racism.

AIM

So often we hear people lament, "Oh, I wish I could have foreseen that!"

Foresight would indeed be better than hindsight. Foresight is really not anything magical, and it is certainly not elusive. All it requires is a little analyzing of the problem, preparing for a solution, time management, and aim. Most important is aim.

Aim is the bright shiny apple the marksmen shoot for at a distance. Aim is the olympic medal champions set their sights on during long years of training. Aim is the business enterprise George Johnson worked to achieve during the years that led him to market Afro Sheen. Aim is the vision parents can direct their children toward. It will require focusing their attention further than the next hour or the next day—it may mean focusing attention years down the road.

When we look far down the road, we gather some plan of action. We ask ourselves, "Now, how can I possibly achieve that goal?"

Directing our children to good futures will require plans of action from both parent and child. The aim for a good future must come from dedication and willingness. Sacrifice may be in order.

Little by little we have to train our children to delay gratifications for a while, to wait for those things that are really important.

I am reminded of a family whose story appeared in a national newspaper several years ago. The family said they could not afford to send their son, who was a graduating senior, to college—but they bought him a cadillac for a graduation present.

Clearly, they were looking only a short distance and were giving immediate gratification. They did not look to the long run; they did not use foresight.

Will you get together with your children and set an aim far down the road that will be beneficial for a hopefilled tomorrow? Include plans and decide on preparations. Then, follow through.

112

FINANCING A COLLEGE EDUCATION

Financing a college education is within reach of most families, but planning and preparation are necessary. Planning involves getting information: Financial aid information from colleges, information on local, state, and government sources of financial aid, information on qualifying for scholarships or loans, and information outlining total expenses at the college of your choice.

Your investigation for information should be well underway by the child's junior year. Know whom to contact, where, and dates.

Average costs at state universities in 1985 was $4,700, and private colleges are generally higher. According to statistics, three out of four students who attend heavily endowed universities receive financial aid; more than half the students at private colleges get financial assistance.

Parents can fill out a financial aid form and send it to the College Scholarship Service in Princeton, N.J. or Berkeley, California or to the American College Testing Program in Iowa City, Iowa. This form is used to determine what amount of money a family can fairly contribute. After you receive their determination in the form of a computerized certification, send copies to colleges where the student has applied.

Federal Funds, estimated at $14.6 billion, go to higher education annually through Pell Grants, Guaranteed Student Loans, Plus Loans, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and College Work Study. Grants are awards you do not have to pay back. Most federal financial aid is awarded on the basis of need. In order to benefit from any of these you must make application.

At a nominal cost you can take advantage of a scholarship search service that matches the student with all the scholarships he qualifies for. Over 250,000 scholarships are listed in the SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH company's computer bank.

In assessing available financial sources, don't overlook awards from foundations, religious organizations, fraternities, soroties, community organizations and civic groups. Often, scholarships are awarded from organizations in the student's field of interest. Check the public library for directories listing this information.

Industry and business offer grants, loans, co-op programs, and scholarships to deserving students, and 60,000 academic scholarships are awarded per year by eight hundred colleges.

Minority students will want to read EDUCATION HANDBOOK FOR BLACK FAMILIES by Delores Friedman. Mrs. Friedman has compiled information on scholarships, grants, fellowships, and loans that directly benefit black students.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLLEGE

Will you choose a community or junior college, or a four-year college or university? Private or state supported? Religious or nonsectarian? Do you want to be close to home or far away?

Many considerations have to be made in choosing a college. These considerations should be based on the student and his needs. Naturally, costs and affordability are partly the family's concern.

If the student has already decided on the career she wants to train for, she will want to look at colleges offering majors in her field of interest and which ones offers the best preparation. Specialized fields such as music, engineering, business, or the arts can be studied in depth at technical four-year colleges. Not to be overlooked are the supportive services found at some colleges.

The small town girl may be more comfortable in a small college setting in a small or medium sized city. She will be interested in the kind of atmosphere for study as well as the social atmosphere. Levels of competition and kind of campus life available affect whether a college is "right."

Is your selected college accredited? Find out before you apply. Visit colleges that interest you, and ask a random sample of students how they like it there. Ask them to name some disadvantages and advantages.

What's the financial picture for you at your chosen college? Will you be able to secure funds to help pay for your child's education? What are the conditions for obtaining funds?

Write for catalogs from a few chosen colleges to study their programs and to get other vital information.

Books to consult: The Index Of Majors, The College Handbook, Barron's Profiles Of American Colleges, Lovejoy's College Guide, and Education Handbook For Black Families by Delores Friedman.

116

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117

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vivian Owens is an educator, writer, and speaker. In 1983 she wrote and produced PARENTING FOR EDUCATION as a radio program. Later, she wrote a newspaper column under the same title. Presently she teaches Chemistry and Physics at a college preparatory high school. As an interpreter of Black Poetry, she delivers public readings of poetry favorites. Giving motivational, inspirational speeches, she has spoken to women in industry, graduating seniors, church, and general audiences. Mrs. Owens is the mother of three children and is married to an engineer. She holds a B.S. Degree in Chemistry from Tuskegee University and a M.S. Degree in Education from James Madison University.